Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia

From Theory to Practice

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Cover illustration: created specially for this dissertation by a Georgian painter and animator Dato Sikharulidze. The image captures the atmosphere of a communicative language lesson.

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Natalia Edisherashvili

geboren te Tbilisi, Georgië
in 1980

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In loving memory of my brother Eddie

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There is a whole range of people who helped me in the process of writing this dissertation in different ways, and here I would like to take this opportunity and extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all of them.

I would certainly like to start by thanking my supervisor Ingrid Tieken and my co-supervisor Dick Smakman to whom I am greatly indebted for being able to complete my work. Ingrid was the very first person (and by now this list thanks to her is much more extensive) at Leiden University whom I met shortly after my arrival in the Netherlands. Her very positive and helpful manner was a strong incentive for me to believe that accomplishing my aspiration of writing a PhD thesis at Leiden University was realistic. So I got started, and Ingrid has always been there to provide the right direction and supervision as needed. It was her who introduced me to the importance of quality and rigor while doing research, to concepts such as Academic Integrity and Research Ethics; she has always tried to convey the message that it is the quality that matters while doing research. I am not sure how far I have met her expectations, but I did my best, and I believe that her advice will have a long-lasting impact and trace on my future academic activities.

Dick Smakman, my co-supervisor, is a person whose efforts and input in the present project were invaluable. He always found time to provide me with very close and systematic supervision. His advice ranged from such meticulous feedback as where to use and where not the articles in English (I really appreciate his real patience here), to such global decisions as whether to include in the study schools all over Georgia or in its capital only. I also very much appreciate how Dick Smakman tried to involve me in certain academic and research activities as well. Helping me publish an article, which he co-authored, was a big honor for me; also letting me be a guest lecturer on the topic of Communicative Language Teaching in his course on Second Language Acquisition has become a yearly tradition for me already.

I would also like to express my admiration at how well co-ordinated and well-complimented the whole supervision process that Ingrid Tieken and Dick Smakman provided was. They formed a wonderful team, who made the working process very efficient. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to both of them for being extremely rigorous in reading the manuscript and providing very constructive and insightful feedback. Integrating the changes suggested was a very rewarding learning experience for me. I would also like to thank them both for doing their best, despite their overly busy schedules, to work along with me under time pressure and to keep to the tight time schedule I had to follow, which I am sure was beyond the call of their duty. I regard myself as extremely fortunate to have had them as my supervisors.

As English is not my native language, and structurally very different from Georgian, I wanted to make sure that the quality of the text was free from inaccuracies, the task which is very difficult to accomplish. This is where Alex Thomson, a well-educated British gentleman, with a linguistic academic background and first-hand knowledge of the Georgian context, turned out to be very helpful. I am extremely grateful to him for relieving me from the stress of worrying much about the quality of the language used. Another person to whom I would like to express my gratitude is Vincent van Heuven. He was the one who helped me with the statistics, the area which was a totally 'uncharted territory' for me until I found myself in need of conducting statistical manipulations for analyzing the data for the present study. He was always ready to provide advice and consultation with regard to which statistical analysis methods to use as well as how to technically run them in SPSS. A word of thanks has also to be directed to Klaas van Veen for the time and advice that he provided for coming up with the methodology of data analysis for Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

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I would also like to thank all the participating school administrations, as well as the 96 teacher and 698 learner participants, who were willing to help and take their time completing the questionnaires, for letting me observe their classes and for being very friendly and open in the whole process of the interviews.

I wish to thank Mr. Scott Thornbury as well, a very prominent figure in the field of English Language Teaching, whose work, both practical as well as theoretical, has been a great inspiration for me throughout my academic and professional career. He has been very responsive to all the questions/comments I directed to him while writing this dissertation. The poem *The Grammar Lesson* – by Mr. Thornbury, written with humor, and well capturing the situation in Foreign Language Teaching currently witnessed in Georgia is, with his permission, provided below.

The picture on the cover has been created specially for this dissertation by my favorite uncle Dato Sikharulidze (even though I have no other uncles except him, I am sure even if I did, he still would be my favorite). So, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to him, as well as to my cousin Mariam Sikharulidze, who has also been very involved in coordinating the whole communication and detail negotiation process between Dato and myself. My heartfelt thanks to them.

And finally, on a more personal basis, I would like to thank my parents, one of the staunchest supporters of my work, who did their best to encourage and motivate me from Georgia. My parents-in-law, who supported, encouraged and cheered me throughout the whole process; to Nunuka, who helped me with taking care of my children, so that I had to worry less about them and could take more time and better concentrate on my work. However, while completely immersed in PhD work, making myself available for the children still turned out to be more challenging than I had imagined. "Mummy, how many more days do you have to go," Anastasia and Aka started asking me impatiently soon after my work took an intensive turn. After realizing that the completion of my work was a longer term perspective, they started asking "Mummy, how many more months exactly do we still have to wait till the things are the way they used to be", and then they gave up. Seeing their messages, written with humor on scraps of paper, and discreetly left on my table in my study, saying "we love you Dr. Edisherashvili", amused me a lot and made me realize they were not that angry and unhappy about what I had been doing after all.

And last, but surely not least, I would like to thank my husband, Shota Gvineria; firstly, for giving me an opportunity to come over to the Netherlands and spend an absolutely wonderful four years in this country. Despite his own stressful and extremely busy schedule of an Ambassador of Georgia to the Netherlands, I could always turn to him for his support and he has always been able to help, listen, comment on and provide his valuable opinion on many issues discussed in the dissertation. He has been wonderful at providing me with much needed confidence and much welcome distraction, which often came in a form of a surprise. Without him, neither the start of this project, nor the ending of it would have been possible.

The Grammar Lesson

By Scott Thornbury (2013)

The teacher enters briskly, taps the board:
'Now pay attention, class, and not a word.'
Her steely gaze subdues the general clamour.
'I'm going to teach the rules of English grammar.'

'I'll start by explicating all the tenses,
Their forms, a few examples, and their senses.
We'll finish, as is usual with a test.
A prize for which of you can answer best.'

He always takes the bus (she writes). 'The present
(Though present, as we speak, it clearly isn't).
We call this timeless present "present simple"
.*My tailor's very rich* is an example.'

'Now look at me,' she orders, as she paces
Between the rows of startled little faces.
'I'm walking to the door. Now I am turning.
I'm teaching you the grammar. You are learning.'

Intending that her actions be the stimulus,
She demonstrates the present tense (continuous). 'For acts that are in progress, it's expressive, and so it's sometimes classified "progressive".'

'Now, who is this?' She shows a pic of Caesar.
'An ancient Roman?' someone says, to please her. She draws a Roman galley, oars and mast.
'*He came, he saw, he conquered*: simple past'.

'And when he came, the weather – it was pouring'. She adds this detail to her simple drawing. And with a gesture eloquently sinuous, she illustrates what means the past continuous.

'*I've been to China*. In my life. Just once.
Time not important. Use the perfect tense.
He lost the race since he had started last:
Had started represents the perfect past.'

'Although it seems a little bit excessive,
We also use the perfect with progressive.
Have you been playing badminton? is how
We ask if something's happening to now.'

'The future forms we'll save until … the future. I think by now you have the general picture. So pen and paper out – yes, you have guessed it: I've taught you stuff and now it's time to test it.'

And this is how, as any learner knows,
The English language grammar lesson goes.
And this is why (the moral of my verse)
The English language learner can't converse.

Abbreviations and symbols

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CELTA	Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ETAG	English Teachers' Association in Georgia
GT	Grammar Translation
ICC	Inter-class correlation
K	Symbol standing for Cohen's Kappa coefficient
F	Symbol used to refer to the effect size of an independent factor on the study outcomes
M	Symbol standing for group mean
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MI	Multiple Intelligences
N	Number

NA	Natural Approach
NAEC	National Assessment and Exam Centre
NCFL	National Curriculum for Foreign Languages
NCTD	National Centre for Teacher Development
p.	Symbol standing for the statistical significance of the difference between groups
Pub. C.	Public Central (school)
Pub. P.	Public Peripheral (school)
Pri. C.	Private Central (school)
Pri. P.	Private Peripheral (school)
r	Symbol standing for the Pearson's correlation coefficient
SD	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Sciences
T	Symbol standing for the teacher
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TELL	Technology-Enhanced Language Learning
TLG	Teach and Learn with Georgia

Statistics Reference Page

This page provides definitions of the statistical terms used in this dissertation

Analysis of Variance (**ANOVA)** – is a statistical test concerned with comparing the means of two or more population samples (Butler, 1985:129).

Bonferroni – is a multiple-comparison post-hoc test that assumes equal variances in the data, and is commonly used with ANOVA (Butler, 1985:127-136).

Brown-Forsythe test – is a test for the homogeneity of variance within the groups under investigation. It is a more robust test that is very similar to Levene's test (Fields, 2012a:8).

Cohen's Kappa – is a statistical coefficient of the degree of inter-rater agreement on qualitative items. It is commonly measured when the raters' level of agreement on certain qualitative data has to be estimated (Haley & Osberg, 1989:90).

Intra-class correlation (ICC) – is a descriptive statistic used for measuring data in a quantitative manner. It detects the similarity level between units in the same group. The ICC is considered to be high when there is a low degree of difference between the ratings assigned to each item by the raters – if the raters give a similar assessment to the items (Fields, 2005:948-954).

Cronbach's Alpha – is a coefficient of internal consistency; it is commonly used as an estimate of inter-item reliability. A value of 7.0 or higher is normally considered to be acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:53).

Factor Analysis – is a statistical tool used for data reduction and/or grouping purposes. This method investigates whether a number of variables of interest are linearly related to a smaller number of unobservable factors (Osborne & Costello, 2005:1).

Test of homogeneity of variance – is a test which checks how similar the level of variance within the dependent variables is (Butler, 1985:127-128).

Independent-Samples T-Test – is a statistical procedure that compares the means of two groups; this test can provide information with regard to whether the difference of the population sample means is significant (Butler, 1985:83).

Levene's test – is an inferential statistics test used to assess the equality of variances in different samples. It tests the condition that the variances of the samples are equal, indicated by the Levene Statistic. (Fields, 2012b:13)

Paired-Samples T-Test – is a statistical procedure that compares the means of two variables of a single group (Butler, 1984:178- 97).

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (referred to as Pearson's r) – is a measure of the linear correlation (dependence) between two variables X and Y, giving a value between +1 and −1 inclusive (Butler, 1985:137-153).

Repeated Measures ANOVA – is a statistical test which compares how a within-subjects experimental group performs in three or more experimental conditions, or how the group is influenced by various independent factors. As the sample is exposed to each condition in turn, the measurement of the dependent variable is repeated (Fields, 2008:1).

Shapiro–Wilks test – is a statistical test of the hypothesis that sample data have been drawn from a normally distributed population (Fields, 2012b:8-9).

Tamhane's T2 – is a multiple comparison, post-hoc, test which is normally used after ANOVA application to see where exactly the difference between groups lies. Tamhanes' T2 thus does not assume equal variances in the groups (Tamhane, 1979: 471-480).

Varimax Rotation – is an orthogonal rotation method of variable axes used in Factor Analysis. It helps maximize the variance of the squared loadings of a factor on the variables, which helps to group different variables under a single extracted factor (Brown, 2009:21).

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6. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY IN GEORGIA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 CHANGING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN GEORGIA

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn" – this aphorism by Benjamin Franklin captures well the essence and importance of choosing the right approach in the teaching/learning process in order to achieve lasting and meaningful results. The language teaching that I was exposed to myself in my secondary school and university years, in the 1990s, was the type which focused on "teaching" rather than "learning": teaching grammar rules, grammar forms, vocabulary lists and uninspiring texts about imaginary people, in imaginary contexts. It was coursebooks inherited by us, newly-independent Georgians, from Soviet authors that constituted the teaching material in those days. We had to memorize and recite word for word whole passages such as "The Working Day of an Engineer" by Bonk (1986), which was about a typical day of a model Soviet citizen, one 'Comrade Petrov'. Later on, some coursebooks and texts, written by foreign authors, were also adopted for English language teaching purposes. *Intermediate English Course* by Gimson (1976), for instance. The very first text from this book, "Quiet Life", which every first-year university student of my generation knew by heart, was somewhat more 'progressive' in a sense, in that it described the typical day not of a Soviet proletarian but of a middle-class Englishman, Felix Catt, living on Syberia Avenue, in a suburb of London.

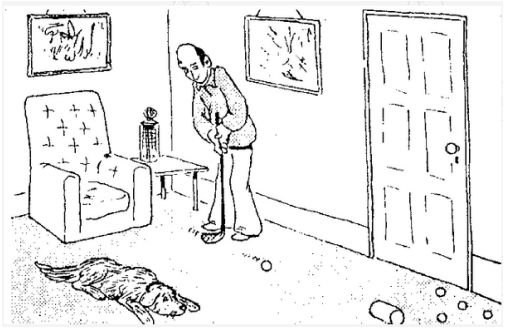

Figure 1.1: Illustration of the text "A Quiet Life" from *Intermediate English Course* by Gimson (1976) [1].

Furthermore, the achievement level recorded for students of foreign languages was assessed based on how well one could remember and recite these texts, as well as on the ability to complete grammar and vocabulary fill-in-the-gaps exercises or to translate texts from English into Georgian and vice versa.

[1] Retrieved from http://inenc.narod.ru/text11.htm (accessed January 2014).

Consequently, grammar and vocabulary instruction constituted an end in itself rather than a means for communication, which is what it would have been in the case of Communicative Language Teaching, the method under research in the present study.

Such form-focused and grammar-driven approach to language teaching, as well as to its assessment, often resulted in the development of learners' memory capacity and recitation skills only. This did not worry most of language teachers in Georgia at that time, who would say: "The main thing is that learners learn grammar rules and vocabulary; they can always learn to speak *later*", or, "By memorizing things, learners remember language structures very well, which then they will be able to apply in speaking". So, mastering speaking and authentic communication skills were put off for later, and was left to learners to come to grips with on their own. Consequently, the vast majority of learners who were exposed to such 'language- rather than learning-centered' methods of language instruction (Kumaravadivelu, 2007: 83) "remembered" certain texts, grammar rules and vocabulary definitions; however, as far as communication skills were concerned, unfortunately, the '*later*' never came for majority of language learners who enjoyed no language learning opportunities outside school. Only those learners who had a chance to be "involved" in extracurricular language learning, through study abroad or travel opportunities, or who managed to have intensive exposure and access to authentic foreign language through the then scarce foreign broadcast media and information technology were able to actually 'learn' the target foreign language.

Here it should also be mentioned that, with the passage of time, understanding of what constitutes competence in a foreign language and the goal of language teaching/learning has also changed. In Soviet times, 'learning' a foreign language meant acquiring linguistic knowledge; language learners were mostly women aspiring to a career in language teaching or to translator positions, very popular professions for females at that time. Their eventual goal, then, was to pass on this body of knowledge to the next generation in the same way their own teachers had done. Indeed, the Soviet academic model placed more emphasis on linguistics and even philology as a subject for mass study than almost any other academic model in the world did. From this perspective, bearing in mind the foreign language teaching/learning aims of that context and the respect afforded to academic linguistic knowledge, we might tone down our critical attitude toward the types of approaches used in language teaching in those days.

However, in today's changed world, little practical use can be derived from knowing grammar rules and vocabulary lists or memorizing texts and the details of imaginary Soviet or British citizens' lives in a non-native language. Today, learners need to be able to act as 'global citizens', to be capable of communicating across borders, in real situations and for real purposes. Consequently, only methods that "involve" learners in the process of learning

and which make language use a means as well as an end of the study process may be claimed to be adequate and relevant to the contemporary individual. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the most popular among such recent approaches, one which emerged as a result of the new economic and sociopolitical circumstances arising in the 1970s in the West, and has maintained its actuality and validity up to the present (Davies & Pearse, 2000: 193), being particularly prized in latter years by emerging economies which have been moving towards the Western model.

The Georgian government, a few years after its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, started making efforts in the direction of transforming language teaching from an old-fashioned model, which no longer met the foreign language needs of Georgian citizens, into a more Westernized practice, focusing on real life language skills. The first official communicative National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL) was adopted in Georgia in 1997, a year when the still desperately impoverished and divided country had barely got over its existential threats. Attempts to bring language teaching in Georgia up to European standards can be perceived in that context as a demonstration of will on the part of the Georgian government to become a more integral part of Europe and the Western world as a more robustly independent state, by means of widely being seen to share those countries' norms and values. Thus, foreign language teaching gained far wider importance than merely linguistic, which also explains the high political and even ideological priority that has been explicitly accorded by politicians to language teaching and learning in schools in Georgia. Nevertheless, in 1997, little else was done beyond the official introduction of a language curriculum, the declared goal of which was transforming a grammar-based foreign language teaching into a communicative one.

As is evident from the literature, not to mention practical observations of the process, the introduction of change and reformation in the field of education is not an easy task to achieve. According to Heyneman (2010), "borrowing a policy is a very delicate matter and can even be counterproductive at times" (cited in Karakhanyan, 2011: 18). Among the things to be considered in case of the transfer of an educational policy from other countries into the local context, as claimed by Bache and Taylor (2003), are "the environment in which changes are planted", as well as the extent to which teachers can make sense of the reform (cited in Karakhanyan, 2011: 18). Frequently, rapidly-adopted changes copied from alien contexts might encounter many more challenges and barriers in a local context than one might expect. There is much evidence that CLT failed to achieve success in many EFL contexts, the reasons ranging from cultural norm incompatibilities and resistance on teachers', learners' as well as parents' part, to certain concrete practicalities of classroom teaching (Ansarey, 2012; Liao, 2000; Li, 1998; Ellis, 1996; Anderson, 1993). Another important factor to be considered in the process of introducing

innovation is the direction of the reform. As Karakhanyan (2011: 21) remarks, when a top-down approach is applied in the process of reformation, it should be expected that the changes will be "superficial" and many gaps will be left behind.

In the case of Georgia, the reform in language teaching was introduced from the top down, imposing the norms and practices of Communicative Language Teaching employed in the Western world upon language teachers and learners in Georgia, who had been used to totally different types of language teaching and learning paradigms. In the first iteration of Georgia's reform of language teaching (in 1997), there was not much done in terms of helping implementers of the reform to come to grips with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully implement the new methodology requirements in actual practice; not much account was taken of the practicalities of the local context either, and the situation in the ELT field remained Soviet methodology-driven, with no signs of communicative aspects of teaching being visible in actual practice at all (Tkemaladze et al., 2001: 112).

The top-down nature of the second wave of the language teaching change in Georgia was such that the then president, Mikheil Saakashvili, made the reforms in the country's teaching of English a major theme of his speeches. This reformation has been ongoing since 2009, and has encompassed much more ambitious attempts than the first phase did. It has included attempts at further refining the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages, employing thousands of native-speaker teachers of English at secondary public schools all over the country, and making efforts to provide new teacher standards, teacher training courses and better school infrastructure (see 5.4). However, in order to prevent reform from failing or from having only a "superficial" effect on the situation, it is essential that the context of change, and factors inhibiting and facilitating the modernization of education, be carefully explored before reforms are undertaken (Karakhanyan, 2011: 21).

Chapter overview

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, the following areas will be dealt with: Section 1.2 discusses the main aims of the present study, and in Section 1.3 the concrete research questions for which this study seeks answers are presented. Study design and the methodology adopted are described in Section 1.4. Section 1.5 discusses the significance of the present study and finally Section 1.6 provides an overview of the structure of the whole dissertation.

1.2 AIMS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

To provide empirical data with regard to the current situation in English language teaching and learning at secondary schools in Tbilisi the present investigation was undertaken. An exploration into the question how theory

meets practice, and to what outcomes the combination of the two leads, is the main goal of the present study. In general, education policy goes through several stages before reaching its ultimate target. Firstly, it needs to penetrate, and be accepted by, the actual implementers of the policy – teachers – and to be approved of and welcomed by the other category of immediate agents of the educational process – learners. Secondly, the policy needs to be actually applied in practice, and should thus have characteristics compatible with classroom realities. Thirdly, the success of a given education policy should ultimately be measured through assessing its effects on learners' knowledge. This is an approach which is adopted in the present work in order to evaluate Communicative Language Teaching situation in Georgia.

Thus, this dissertation comprises the four studies which look into different areas of Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia: they explore how language teachers and learners understand and how receptive they are to CLT, what the actual language classroom reality is, and how far the sum of all of these factors is reflected in the level of learners' communicative proficiency in English. The sequence of the areas that were explored one at a time in order to arrive at an understanding of the state of affairs of CLT in Georgia is graphically represented in Figure 1.2 below.

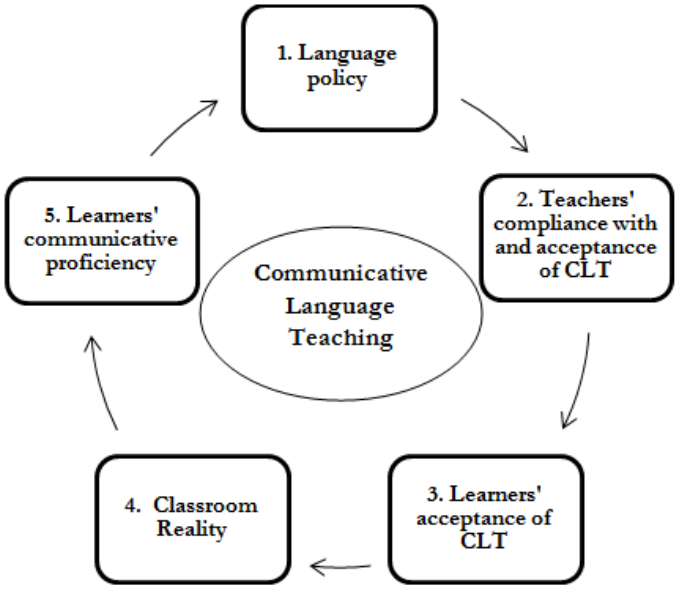

Figure 1.2: Areas involved in change implementation in foreign language teaching

The language policy component, as represented in Figure 1.2 above, is the very first component of the language reform process. The current National

Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia is described in Chapter 6 in order to provide an official framework for foreign language teaching and learning in Georgia. The goals, nature and levels of achievement of the observed language teaching and learning process in Georgia and its outcomes are then discussed within and with reference to this framework. As for the research areas 2, 3 and 4 shown in Figure 1.2, they have been explored in much detail in the four studies presented in Chapters 7–10. They represent a separate pieces of research in their own right, consisting of their own introduction, methodology, results and conclusions sections (for more detailed information about the structure of the dissertation, see Section 1.5 below).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Below are presented the summaries of the main research questions for each of the study. More detailed research questions can be found in the relevant chapters (Chapters 7–10).

Study 1 (Chapter 7)

- How aware are English language teachers of the official recommendations with regard to foreign language teaching in Georgia, and what is the reported level of compliance with these recommendations on their part?
- What are their attitudes towards CLT?
- What effect do school context and certain teacher characteristics have on the study results?

Study 2 (Chapter 8)

- What are English language learners' attitudes towards CLT at secondary schools in Tbilisi?
- What effect do school type and certain learner characteristics have on their attitudes?
- What is the level of discrepancy between learners' and teachers' attitudes towards this method?

Study 3 (Chapter 9)

- How communicative are English language classes at secondary schools in Tbilisi?
- What are the observed practical challenges that inhibit language teaching from having a communicative character?
- What effect do school type and certain teacher characteristics have on the communicative nature of English language classes?
- What are the discrepancies between what English language teachers theorize and what they actually practice in their language classes?

Study 4 (Chapter 10)

- How close does English language learners' actual communicative proficiency in Tbilisi come to the communicative language requirements outlined in the *National Curriculum for Foreign Languages*?
- What effect do school type and learner characteristics have on learners' actual communicative proficiency in English?

1.4 GENERAL APPROACH TO THE PRESENT STUDY

To answer the research questions, and given that certain research questions necessitated both qualitative and quantitative data analyses, a mixed-method design was adopted in the present study. As claimed by Haladyna et al. (1991), "[To] judge the value of an outcome or end, one should understand the nature of the process or means that led to that end" (1991: 6). Hence, secondary school learners' communicative proficiency level in Tbilisi was not explored in isolation in the present study; rather, the whole chain of components leading to the end goal of Communicative Language Teaching has been thoroughly investigated. Since teaching and learning are constructs which occur interactively in the classroom, both teacher-related and learner-related investigations were undertaken in the present study.

A number of choices were made with regard to the study context as well, which I decided to restrict to the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi only. There were several reasons for this; first, innovation and policy change diffusion largely starts out from the capital city, and the outcome in terms of achieved success was accordingly expected to be best visible in Tbilisi; second, it was expected that enough variation could be detected within the capital only, and that proceeding with language teaching and learning situation investigation in the regions, outside the capital, would affect the depth and feasibility of the present study. Also, to keep the research focused, it was decided to look into the situation at the secondary schools only, and restrict the study to a particular age range within secondary schools (for more discussion see Section 7.2.1).

Methodological choices were also made with regard to making the study context even more specific: most significantly, as the official language policy in Georgia applies to public as well as private schools, both types of secondary schools were included in the study. Further differentiation was made with regard to school locations: centrally-located as well as peripherally-located schools in the capital city were approached. The graphical illustration of the whole research design – the research context, research areas, as well as research tools and the amount of data obtained – is provided in Figure 1.3 below.

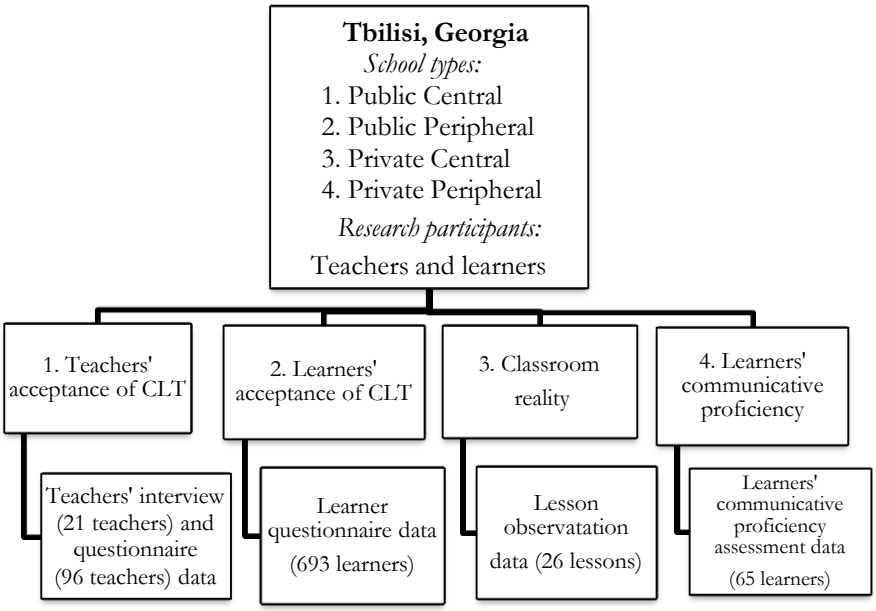

Figure 1.3: Research context, areas studied and the obtained data

More information about the research methodology employed for each study area presented in Figure 1.3 above can be found in the corresponding dissertation chapter. Also, to better illustrate the study context, which applies to all the empirical research presented in chapters 7–10 of this dissertation, a map of Tbilisi, with the participating schools marked on it, is presented in Figure 1.4 below:

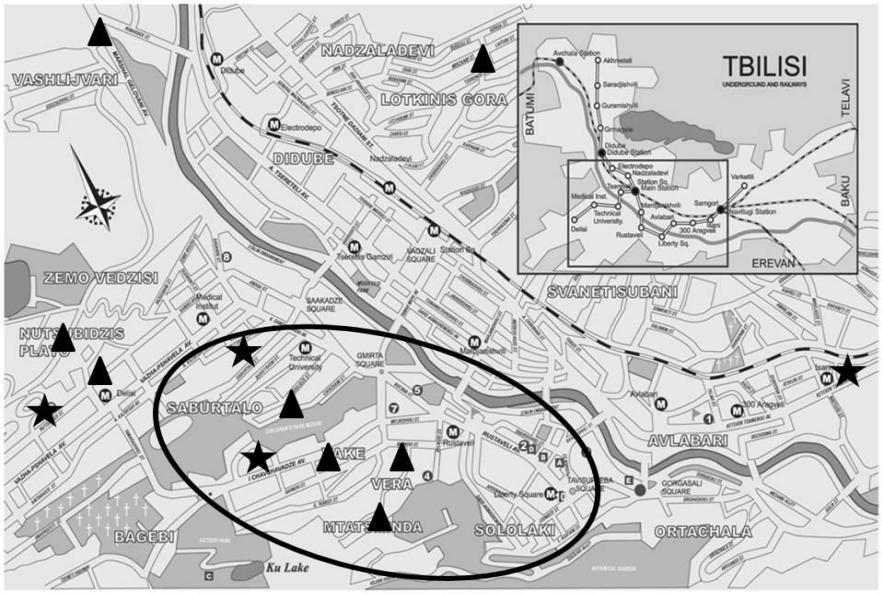

Figure 1.4: Map of Tbilisi and locations of the schools of the present study[2]

Consequently, the results of all four studies were analyzed against varying context-related, as well as teacher- and learner-related, external factors. Thus, in each analysis chapter, the general tendencies are explored first, which are then further broken down into the different school types (the four school types) as well as being considered in terms of teacher and learner characteristics. This approach proved to be useful, as a number of differences were revealed as a result of including the external factor as a differentiating variable, leading to a more accurate and informative output.

1.5 PREVIOUS RESEACH AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Since the area which the present dissertation explores, Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia, and the related theory and practice officially starts in 1997 (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:18), not much previous research is available in this regard, whether focusing on theoretical or on practical aspects. In the process of a review of literature for this study, whereas a plethora of resources was available that discussed CLT in other countries, little was available discussing CLT in a Georgian context. The only research dealing with

[2] Map has been retrieved from: http://www. besttbilisihotels. com/images/ Tbilisi%20map % 202.jpg. The central part of Tbilisi is marked with a circle on the map. Triangles stand for public and stars for private school types (accessed December 2013).

CLT and language teaching in Georgia was an empirical study undertaken by a group of five Georgian researchers in 2001 with the support of the Georgia branch of the British Council and the Ministry of Education of Georgia, entitled *Teaching and Learning English in Georgia 2001: A Baseline Study* (Tkemeladze et al., 2001). This study was of the utmost importance, as it was the first of its kind, exploring the state of affairs in foreign language teaching and learning in the post-Soviet period, coming four years after the first Communicative Curriculum for Foreign Languages was introduced in Georgia in 1997.

Nevertheless, with regard to the above mentioned study, it can be argued that the history of the reform at that time, stretching merely from 1997 to 2001, had been too short for CLT measures to have had a real impact on the situation of language teaching and learning in Georgia. Also, many more efforts aimed at transforming the post-Soviet language teaching model in Georgia into a more modern, communication-oriented experience were undertaken in the first decade of the 2000s, and this effort still continues today. No other investigation of developments in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field in Georgia has been conducted since then, and many policy decisions and novelties with regard to foreign language teaching in Georgia in the years since the publication of Tkemaladze et al. have been either copied wholesale from other Western contexts or were made on intuitive grounds. Thus, in acknowledgement of the urgency of further research being undertaken in order to investigate how things have further developed since the second, stronger wave of language teaching reform that took place in Georgia in 2009, the present study was conducted. It is hoped that the findings of this investigation of Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia will provide a certain degree of continuity with the previous research and that these findings may serve as a basis for future research to be conducted in the area of language teaching and learning in Georgia.

Furthermore, the methodological approach adopted in the present study, looking as it does into theoretical as well as practical aspects of language teaching in Tbilisi, allows me to derive information with regard to the situation in terms of Georgian learners' communicative proficiency in English, but also to gain insight into the factors that have been conducive to the final results obtained. Such an approach facilitates the provision of better-informed recommendations with regard to what needs to be changed and what further efforts need to be undertaken to contribute to the goal of better achieving in actual teaching practice the theoretical aims presented in the language policy documents. It is hoped that these recommendations will eventually be reflected in an improvement of the overall status of Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia as well as in improved communicative proficiency by Georgian learners.

Also, since the research tools *per se* did not specifically focus on English language teaching, but rather bear a general character, they could be applicable to similar future studies conducted with regard to the situation for other foreign languages as well as in the contexts of other countries, particularly those with a post-Soviet or at least post-communist background.

1.6 DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The present dissertation consists of two parts: the introductory chapters (Chapters 2-6) provide theoretical and contextual background to the second, analysis-based part of the dissertation (Chapters 7–10). Below follows an outline of how the remainder of this dissertation is organized.

Chapter 2 is about the general history of language teaching – about various language instruction methods, their underlying theories, procedures and goals. In this chapter, CLT is presented as one of the approaches to language teaching that have arisen historically. Chapter 3 focuses on CLT only, describing in detail its history and theoretical basis. The information presented in this chapter was essential for developing suitable research tools, which, as they were aimed at investigating the application as well as the effects of CLT, had to be based on clearly-identified CLT principles. Hence the research instruments used in this study – interviews, questionnaires and observation forms – closely follow the sections presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 is about modernizing CLT and the role that information technology can play in this regard. Chapter 5 places foreign language teaching into a Georgian context and deals with developments in the field since Soviet times up to the present day. Developments in the area of technology-enhanced teaching in Georgia are also touched upon in this chapter. In Chapter 6, the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages, adopted in 2009 and subsequently revised in 2011, is discussed in detail. This is important in order to have a point of reference and framework against which requirements for language teachers as well as learners in Georgia can be measured, and the levels of achievement defined.

Chapter 7 is the first of the data analysis chapters of the present dissertation. It focuses on language teachers as the main implementers of language methodology change in Georgia, whose role is believed to be key to the success of the process of reform implementation. This chapter explores teachers' familiarity with the communicative curriculum requirements, their understanding of theoretical underpinnings of CLT as well as their attitudes towards this method. Chapter 8 delves into the attitudes of learners, who are the other agents of the study process, and whose evaluations are believed to matter very much as far as the language teaching method that they are exposed to is concerned. Whereas the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8 deals with theoretical aspects of communicative langage teaching, Chapters 9 and 10 explore the more practical side of the situation, which is most important to determine the

efficiency and degree of success of CLT adopted as an official language teaching method in secondary schools in Georgia. Chapter 9 investigates the actual classroom reality at twelve secondary schools in Tbilisi. Thus, Study 3 (Chapter 9) sheds light on what works and what does not work in actual practice at secondary schools in Georgia. Being a follow-up to teacher and learner interviews and questionnaire surveys, it also allows for the possibility of comparison between what teachers and learners say with what they actually do in the classroom and reveals the possible discrepancy between the two. Finally, Chapter 10, the last of the four analysis chapters measures the end-product of all the efforts made at the theoretical as well as practical level: it reports the results of Georgian learners' communicative proficiency, which is measured against the requirements and standards presented in the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia.

Finally, Chapter 11 summarizes the results and draws conclusions on the basis of the findings obtained. It also places the present investigation in a theoretical framework, and provides practical recommendations with regard to what needs to be changed and what further efforts need to be undertaken in order to make the success of Communicative Language Teaching more evident at all secondary schools in Tbilisi.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Placing CLT, the language teaching method which is the focus of the present dissertation, in its historical context enables the reader to compare and contrast it with other teaching methods described in the mainstream literature that deals with the second-language learning/teaching field, and to accentuate the distinctive features characteristic of CLT in better ways (for a detailed discussion on Communicative Language Teaching, see Chapter 3). For this reason, a brief disucssion of the foreign language teaching methodology history is provided in the present chapter. A more detailed overview of the chapter is provided below.

Chapter overview

The present Section of this chapter (Section 2.1) discusses the general dynamics observed throughout the history of language teaching methods and the method categorization principles adopted in this chapter. The older mainstream methods of foreign language teaching, such as the Classical Method/ Grammar Translation, The Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, are described in Section 2.2. The shift towards more communicative approaches to language teaching and the emergence of so called "alternative methods" are looked at in Section 2.3, while Section 2.4 discusses the Communicative Approaches. Finally, Section 2.5 provides a summary of the chapter as well as a discussion of the "post-method condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 161) witnessed today.

Foreign language teaching became a profession in the early twentieth century, when the concept of a "method" emerged in language teaching, a concept referring to "a set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 1). The theoretical grounds and principles underlying a certain method were subsequently used to form the basis for foreign language teaching curriculum, syllabus, classroom procedure, and for defining teachers' and learners' roles as well as material design. There were, in addition, some cases where methods were not supported by any profound theoretical basis, but rather emerged as a result of certain strong culturally-grounded beliefs with regard to what the value and general goal of language learning was, the Classical Method and the Grammar Translation Method being two such instances (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 1; for more discussion, see Section 2.2).

Since the emergence of the profession of language teaching, a constant search has been ongoing on the part of applied linguists and teachers for a teaching method which would prove to be more efficient than the previous

one. The failure of a given existing language teaching method to accomplish its goal and the emergence of new language teaching theories and ideologies in linguistics and adjacent fields of study resulted in frequent changes and innovations in the field throughout the twentieth century (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 1). According to Brown (2007), "a glance through the previous decades of language teaching shows that as disciplinary schools of thought – namely, psychology, linguistics and education – waxed and waned, along went language-teaching trends" (2007: 1). Thus, it can be said that the tendency in foreign language teaching was that of seesawing: that one method would usually be replaced by a radically different alternative, which can be explained by the fact that the lack of success of a given method occasioned a desperate search for another approach representing the other extreme of teaching ideology. As Mackey (2006: 138) rightly remarks, "while sciences have advanced by approximations in which each new stage results from an improvement, not rejection, of what has gone before, language-teaching methods have followed the pendulum of fashion from one extreme to the other".

It should also be noted that a certain ambiguity has been witnessed and debate has been ongoing with regard to what exactly the term 'method' refers to and what components it comprises. To cast some clarity upon the issue and to provide insight into the efforts made, prominent representatives of the language teaching field have tried to "lessen the terminological confusion" (Antony, 1963: 67), the discussion below offers an overview of the topic. In an attempt to provide an accurate and comprehensive definition of 'method', the works of three applied linguists have been considered here: the three-component model of definition of the term offered by Anthony (1963); another three-component definition by Richard and Rodgers (1982); and a two-component one suggested by Kumaravadivelu (2008). Antony distinguishes between *Approach*, *Method*, and *Technique,* defining approach as *"*a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning. It describes nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith…" (2008: 63-64), whereas a method is "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural" (2008: 65) and a technique can be described as "a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective" (2008: 66). According to Kumaravadivelu, this arguably rather simplistic, "hierarchical" depiction of classroom teaching activities, coupled with the "blurred" distinctions offered in Antony's definition with regard to the proposed concepts of approach, method and techniques, necessitated a further "refinement" of the terminology (2008: 85). This job was first undertaken by Richards and Rodgers (1982, 1985) who offered the substitution model of *Approach, Design* and *Procedure,* both terms are

included under *Method,* which includes the components of theory as well as practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 16).

> The first level, *approach*, defines those assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning which operate as axiomatic constructs or reference points and provide a theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in classrooms. The second level in the system, *design*, specifies the relationship of theories of language and learning to both the form and function of instructional materials and activities in instructional settings. The third level, *procedure*, comprises the classroom techniques and practices which are consequences of particular approaches and designs. (Richards & Rodgers 1982: 154)

Richards and Rodgers' definition of the term *Approach* coincides with that offered by Antony; however, *Design* and *Procedure* (replacing Antony's *Method* and *Technique*) provide more detailed definitions: under *Design*, the further concepts of language teaching syllabus, learner and teacher roles, and instructional materials and their types and functions are also specified (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 86). *Procedure*, like *Technique* in the Antony framework, refers to actual classroom activities; however, Richards and Rodgers describe this component in more elaborate terms: "the types of teaching and learning techniques, the types of exercises and practice activities, and the resources – time, space, equipment – required to implement recommended activities" (Kuramavadivelu, 2008: 86).

Charging Richards and Rodgers' model with being somewhat ambiguous, and criticizing the three-component model of describing classroom teaching activities as "redundant and overlapping", Kumaravadivelu suggests the two-component model of definition of the language teaching related terms: namely, of *Principles* and *Procedures* (2008: 86, 87). He merges the levels of *Approach* and *Design* proposed by Richards and Rodgers and elaborates that the activities described under method/design, such as "syllabus construction, material production, and the determination of learner/teacher roles" go beyond the responsibilities of a practicing teacher, who should be in charge of the undertakings that fall under technique/procedure aspect of language instruction (2008: 87).

Acknowledging the validity of the reasoning offered by Kumaravadivelu with regard to the interpretation of language teaching-related terminology, the model offered by Richards and Rodgers is the one adopted in the present dissertation, as their use of 'method' as a general term for referring to the unity of language teaching principles, as well as their *Approach* versus *Method* distinction, provides the more elaborate definitions needed (with *Approach* referring to the broader term under which *Method* falls as a sub-category) to describe the teaching methods later in this chapter, as well as in other parts of the present dissertation.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2008), "another source of tiresome ambiguity that afflicts language teaching is the absence of a principled way to categorize language teaching methods in a conceptually coherent fashion" (2008: 90), which is due to the emergence of a plethora of major and minor methods, some mainstream, some alternative, during the twentieth century. The "Method Boom" (Stern, 1985: 249) that was witnessed in the 1970s made this need even more obvious. Currently, Kumaravadivelu (2008: 90-92) claims, there are at least "a dozen" of various language teaching methods methods, and the categorization scheme he offers is as follows.

a. *Language-centerd methods* –deal with language structures mainly and aim to help learners practice "pre-selected" and "presequenced linguistic structures" through pre-determined form-oriented activities (such as, the Grammar Translation and the Audio-Lingual Method).
b. *Learner-centerd methods* – deal with learner needs and relevant contexts and aim to provide opportunities for learners to practice "preselected and presequenced linguistic structures" as well as provide communicative/ functional abilities through meaning-oriented exercises (such as the approach at the focus of this thesis and currently officially favored in Georgia, Communicative Language Teaching).
c. *Learning-centered methods* – deal with the "cognitive processes of language learning" and considered them as "nonlinear" and thus unsuited for predetermined activities and approaches to teaching. Hence, these methods (such as, the Natural Approach) aim at providing learners with opportunities for spontaneous, meaningful communication through which language knowledge is hoped to be constructed.

Yet another form of grouping foreign language teaching methods is adopted by Richards and Rodgers in their book *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2001), according to which the trends in language teaching over the last fifty years are presented in the following three categories:

a. Major trends in twentieth-century language teaching
b. Alternative approaches and methods
c. Current communicative approaches.

The presentation of foreign language teaching methods adopted in this chapter will follow Richards and Rodgers' model, as this approach allows for readers to be provided with historical and chronological perspectives on language teaching methods in addition to descriptions at theoretical (where evident), design and procedural levels.

2.2 MAJOR METHODS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The first method as such that emerged historically in Europe in the teaching of non-native languages was the Classical Method, which was mainly used for teaching Latin and Greek. According to this method, it was believed that a profound knowledge of the grammar of the target language would contribute to better familiarization with and mastery of the grammatical system of one's native language and that the language learning process would also be a beneficial "mental exercise even though learners would probably never use the target language" (Dincay, 2010: 43).

Later, in the spread of extensive schooling to the middle and lower social classes in the latter part of the 19th century, the Classical Method was modified for the teaching of modern foreign languages and came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method (GT). The Grammar Translation Method has no real theoretical bases – whether "linguistics, psychological or educational" –to corroborate its practices (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: 5). It was a language teaching method devised on pragmatic grounds of economy and suited the existing institutional resources. GT offered very little beyond insight into grammatical rules and some measure of involvement by learners in the process of translating texts from a second language into a native tongue. No focus on communication or real-life language was provided under this method (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: 4).

The process of globalization and the increase in foreign travel for both business and pleasure in late 19th-century Europe and latterly other continents brought about the need for something approaching mass oral proficiency in foreign languages. As a result, the Direct Method emerged, which was the opposite extreme to the Grammar-Translation Method. The idea emphasized in the Direct Method is that learning a language is an innate ability and that foreign languages ought to be learned in the same way children pick up their first language – by being directly exposed to the language, with no translation employed at all (Richards & Rodgers, 1996: 9). A generation after the appearance of the Direct Method in Europe (1920s-1930s), this method evolved into the Oral Approach (1950s-1960s), or as it is more frequently referred to, Situational Language Teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986: 31). One of the distinctive features of Situational Language Teaching is the emphasis it places on linking knowledge of structures to situations of their practical application: meaning is explained through situational dialogues, visual aids, realia, pantomime, gestures, demonstration, mime and drawing, with no recourse to the students' mother tongue (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 41-46).

As applied linguists in Europe were engaged in developing the Structural-Situational Method, their American counterparts were called upon by their government, already drawn into World War II, to devise an effective, accelerated course to teach their army personnel conversation skills in various foreign languages, so that they could work as interpreters, code-room assistants

and translators. As a reult, an intensive Audio-Lingual Method, also called as "the Army Method" (1940-1960s), emerged. Under this method, it was recommended that learners be taught a foreign language for six days a week, ten hours a day (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 50-51; Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 98). Being based on the behavioural theory, this method largely focuses on speaking and listening skills and effective habit formation through adequate reinforcement. The Audio-Lingual Method largely employs rote memorization, repetition, drills and dialogues in the study process (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 100; Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 56, 58).

2.3 ALTERNATIVE METHODS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006) "language-centered methods proved to be immensely helpful to the classroom teacher. The entire pedagogic agenda was considered teacher-friendly, as it provided a neat rules-of-thumb framework with which to work". In language centered methods, the aims of language teaching, teaching materials, lesson structure as well as assessment approaches are clearly determined. Thus, the teacher is in complete control of classroom processes and at ease (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 109). However, convenience and ease with which a cetrain teaching method can be employed does not necessarily mean their being successful. The strongly-felt inadequacy of the "language-centered" teaching methods, together with new insights emerging in the field of psychology and linguistics, triggered a quest for a substitute for the existing language teaching methods which would be better adapted to the newly emerged language learning needs. This led to the latter 20th-century paradigm shift in the language teaching field (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 109, 113).

In the early 1950s, Noam Chomsky and his followers challenged previous assumptions about language teaching. He drew the attention of the applied linguists and language teachers to the 'deep structure' of language and professed that language learning is about creativity more than about habit formation, and that humans are capable of coming up with linguistic structures that they have never heard before, not merely copying the model provided but creating them on their own (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 153).

In addition to Chomsky's ideas, the advances in cognitive science and educational psychology made by Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) in the first half of the century strongly influenced language teaching theory in the 1960s and 1970s. These new trends cast doubt on the effectiveness of the traditional prescriptive approaches to language teaching and on the stimulus-response mechanism and habit-formation proposed by behaviourists. They were also in line with the spirit of the age, favored more humanistic views, encouraging an emphasis on the affective and interpersonal nature of learning by putting a greater focus on the learner and on social interaction. These new tendencies and developments in linguistic and

psychological theories gave way to the "communicative movement" in mainstream language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 71), leading to the emergence of Communicative Approaches (which will be discussed in Section 2.4 below). However, around the same time, in the 1970s-1980s, the period which is referred to as the "Method Boom" (Stern, 1985: 249), other experimental methods, which also came to be known as "Designer Methods" (Nunan, 1989: 97), or "Alternative Methods" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 71), emerged in parallel with the communicative approaches.

Alternative Methods, it is claimed, focus on certain aspects neglected by the traditional approaches, such as feelings, emotions and interpersonal relationships, and hence, are sometimes also called "Humanistic Methods" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 71). According to Richards and Rodgers, "these methods are developed around particular theories of learners and learning, sometimes the theories of a single theorizer or educator" (2001: 71). Summaries of these methods, which in Kuramavadivelu's (2008) terms fall under the "Learning-Centered Methods" category, are presented in the paragraphs that follow below in this section.

The "alternative methods" mentioned in the preceding paragraph can be further classified into certain groups: three methods, Total Physical Response (Asher, 1970s), Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrel, 1983) and Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993), can be housed under a more general umbrella category, the Comprehension Approach**.** As Richards and Rodgers (2001) summarize, what all these three methods have in common are the following:

a) It is believed that the receptive skills are mastered before productive skills are
b) It is believed that speaking should be taught only after the comprehension skills are acquired
c) It is believed that acquisition of a listening skill is beneficial to other skills development as well
d) It is believed that in the teaching/learning process more attention should be given to the meaning of the language rather than its form
e) It is believed that teaching/learning process should be stress free (2001: 78-79).

In Kumaravadivelu's (2008: 93-94) analysis, the theoretical premises of the Comprehension Approaches rest upon the following principles:

In Comprehensive Approaches:

a. Language development is incidental, not intentional
b. Language development is meaning-focused, not form-focused
c. Language development is comprehension-based, not production-based
d. Language development is cyclical and parallel, not sequential or additive.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) developed in the 1970s is influenced by developmental psychology, learning theory and humanistic pedagogy (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:73). In the TPR, physical movement activities are employed to achieve teaching/learning goals. TPR advocates that both language and body movement are synchronized through action responses and the use of the imperative. According to TPR, learning should resemble the natural process of language acquisition by children, who develop their listening competence first by responding physically to their caregivers' commands and only at a later stage becoming capable of spontaneously imitating and producing the language to which they are exposed (Rodgers, 2001: 74-89).

The Natural Approach (NA) was initially proposed by Terrell (1977; 1982). Terrell sought to incorporate into language teaching the "naturalistic" principles identified in studies dealing with second-language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The Natural Approach (NA), like the Direct Method, is based on the assumption that a spontaneous, unorganized language teaching process, ostensibly resembling first-language acquisition, is "the only learning process which we know for certain will produce mastery of the language at a native level" (Newmark & Reibel, 1968: 153). Drawing on the theoretical basis discussed above, in the Natural Approach no explicit correction or grammar instruction is provided, the main emphasis being the teaching of lexis and of fluency, and the main target of the language learning being defined as communicating the right messages and meanings (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:178-191).

The Lexical Approach**,** also known as the "Slot and Filler Approach", is a method of teaching foreign languages described by Lewis in the 1990s. This method assumes that the basic building blocks of language learning is not grammar, functions or notions, but rather words and word combinations (collocations) in a language: in a word, lexis. It further assumes that learning a language involves the ability to comprehend, memorize and produce lexical phrases as chunks. The language is perceived as "grammaticalized lexis not lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1993), which means that vocabulary is prized over grammar *per se* in this approach. In the Lexical Approach, for the first time in the history of the profession, the language syllabus was based on a lexical rather than grammatical scheme (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:138). Having discussed three of the methods that fall under the "Comprehension Methods" category, in the remainder of this section [2.3], more "Alternative Methods", which are also believed to be more "humanistic", are further summarized.

The Silent Way also emerged as a result of a new perception of effective teaching and learning. It was adopted by Caleb Gattegno, who specialized in education through discovery and awareness. The word "silent" was used in the name of the method to assert that language learning does not necessarily take place as a result of much repetition and modeling. The main beliefs underpinning this method consist of the following principles: a) a learner

acquires the language better if he/she discovers language rules and meanings himself/herself and is creative rather than repeats and responds; b) learning is facilitated through the use of certain associative mediators, i.e., physical objects which help in creating memorable images and facilitate recall on the learners' part in the process of learning; c) a problem-solving approach contributes to language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 81). In this "artificial approach", silent awareness plays the key role: silence helps learners concentrate, whereas repetition "consumes time and encourages the scattered mind to remain scattered" (Gattegno, 1976:80). The Silent Way can well be considered not an approach or a method, but rather a complimentary micro-technique, which should be used in combination with other mainstream methods (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:81-89; Kumaravadivelu, 2006:92).

The Suggestopedia, developed in the 1970s, can be regarded as one of the most extravagant of the so-called "alternative" or "humanistic approaches", i.e., approaches which, in line with the spirit of the latter 20th century, cater to the feelings and emotions of modern learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2008:73). The name of the method is illustrative of the concept upon which it is based: that the power of positive suggestion or, negatively, "desuggestion" of perceived limitations can have a "placebo effect" on learners, resulting in increased self-confidence, receptiveness and learning capacity in the study process (Lozanov, 1978:267). An important component that has to be incorporated into the teaching/learning process is the fine arts: music, art and drama, which is believed to be a stimulant of learners' mental reserves. A teacher is supposed to be very positive and encouraging, and should establish relaxed, child-parent type relationships with students, so that they are more open to learning (Freeman-Larsen, 2000: 75-80; Richards & Rodgers, 2001:102).

Community Language Learning (CLL) is based on the theoretical premises offered by Carl Rodgers' (1902-1987) humanistic psychology. This creative, dynamic and non-directive approach to language learning tries to apply psychological counseling techniques to learning, so the method is also known as Counseling-Learning. Its organizational rationale is based on the insight that in the learning process, advice, assistance and support need to be provided by the teacher to the learner, the latter being seen in the role of "a client", and the former in that of a "counselor" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:90). The humanistic techniques (Moskowits, 1978) which are also the basis of Community Language Learning/Counseling Learning support the engagement of the whole person in the learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:91).

Multiple Intelligences (MI) reflects the ideas expressed in cognitive psychology by Howard Gardener (1993). According to MI theory, there exist at least eight intelligences/talents within each individual which need to be acknowledged and developed. It is believed that learners learn best if the content is delivered in different ways, adapted to the capacities of individual learners and tapping various intelligences that learners possess (Richards &

Rodgers 2001:115). Consequently, individualized approach to teaching is adopted, where teachers act as needs analysts, selecting and employing a wide range of teaching materials and activities in the study process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:120).

To sum up the discussion about the "alternative methods" of the 1970s described above, it can be said that even though these methods provide interesting, innovative and more humanistic insights into teaching/learning and are welcome by many in the contexts in which they were launched, they are comparatively "underdeveloped" in their language theory and not part of the mainstream foreign language teaching field (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:71). This might explain why these methods are referred to as useful techniques that can be used in combination with other methods to achieve specific language teaching purposes, rather than as fully-fledged methods in their own right.

2.4 THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

As already mentioned in the previous section, by the 1960s and early 1970s, the need had emerged to teach languages more creatively for communicative purposes. Brooks (1964) effectively summarizes the dramatic paradigm shift that took place in the language teaching field at that time:

> The comfortable grammar-translation days are over. The new challenge is to teach language as communication, face-to-face communication between speakers and writer-to-reader communication. A constant objective is to learn to do with the new language what is done with it by those who speak it natively. (1964, vii)

Doubt was being cast in these decades on the effectiveness of the inherited "language-centered" pedagogy: the established "additive" and unitary view of the language system, as well as "the linearity" of the learning process, was called into question, as it was no longer believed to be capable of addressing the modern communicative needs of the learner (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 114). Newmark (1966) asserted that if the choice was made to teach the acquisition of each linguistic feature in a systematic and analytical manner, progressing from the easiest to the most difficult, and only later tied into connected speech, "the child learner would be old before he could say a single appropriate thing and the adult learner would be dead" (1966: 79). Instead, more holistic, learner-oriented approaches to language teaching started to be advocated. As a result, a number of communicative methods to language teaching appeared (for more discussion about the emergence of communicative methods, see Sections 2.3 and 3.2).

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), the Communicative Approach to language teaching is not based upon a "monolithic" theoretical framework, but rather draws upon a "multidisciplinary" basis, resulting in openness to such

distinct interpretation on the teachers' part that one is justified in talking in terms of a plurality of communicative methods (2006:116). Specifically, some of the major language teaching methods that fall under the broader term of communicative approach are Communicative Language Teaching, Content-Based Instruction and Task-Based Language Teaching (Richards & Rodger, 2001:152).

2.4.1 Communicative Language Teaching

The literature dealing with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the focus of the present dissertation, is rather inconsistent in that writers refer to it sometimes as "a method" and sometimes as "an approach". It is obvious that CLT has a rather broad framework, allowing much freedom of interpretation, normally characteristic of a language teaching approach; however, it also has certain unique characteristics, at the theoretical as well as procedural level, which allows for the differentiating of CLT from other communicative methods (see Richard & Rodgers, 2001:151). Hence, in the present dissertation, while acknowledging its approach-like nature, CLT is still referred to as a method.

CLT is emerged in the 1970s. It was the first method to lay the ground-work for all subsequent communicative methods of language teaching which fall under the category of the Communicative Approach. Today, it is still believed to be the method "most used by trained teachers" (Davies & Pearse, 2000:193) and "revolutionary" in the field of language teaching (Swartbrick, 1994:1). As mentioned above, CLT is claimed to be a flexible method of language teaching rather than a strictly-defined set of teaching practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:116). Based on the theories developed in structural linguistics in the 1960s, and on further developments in sociolinguistics and functional linguistics, the main principle that is emphasized in CLT is the communicative value of the language: language learning is about being able to communicate in various contexts, and the goal of language teaching is developing Communicative Competence in learners. If earlier methods emphasized the structural side of the language, CLT pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language (Littlewood, 1981:1).

The syllabus of CLT can be described as notional/functional, aimed at providing learners with communicative proficiency through focusing not only on language form but also on its application in actual use. In CLT, activities involving real communication are used to carry out meaningful tasks, requiring language that is meaningful to the learner and that engages them in meaningful and authentic situations. Games are widely used, as they provide many opportunities for real-life (and spontaneous) communicative situations. Pair/group work is encouraged to maximize the amount of communicative practice and to promote a cooperative mode of learning. A CLT teacher acts as

a facilitator, an independent participant and a counselor in the learning process. Mistakes are tolerated and the emphasis is on the process of communication rather than just on the linguistic form. Students assume the role of an autonomous learner, an active interpreter of input, trained to be tolerant of some types of uncertainties, willing to explore alternative learning strategies. Teaching materials have great importance as a source and stimulant for true communication. The main criteria for appropriate materials are comprehensibility and authenticity. Consequently, realia and authentic materials are widely used in the CLT classroom. The objectives of CLT are more general than being finely-tuned to learners' needs. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 163-72). While CLT aims at teaching learners how to communicate, there are other "stronger" versions of this method, which make communication itself the main means of teaching/learning (see also Section 3.3.). These communicative methods will be discussed in the subsections that follow.

2.4.2 Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction (CBI), also referred to as Content and Language Integrated Learning appeared around the 1980s (Howatt, 1984:279). The main idea in CBI is to integrate the academic content with the learning of the language and thus to make the process more relevant, meaningful and motivating for the learner. Proponents of this method believe that second-language learning is best realized when the language is used for obtaining information and when the primary focus is not on the language but on content which is interesting, useful and "comes from outside the domain of language" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:209-210). Through such an approach, students "learn the language as a by-product of learning about the real-world content" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:205).

CBI promotes integrated skills development through topic-based classes and builds upon students' existing knowledge that they bring into the classroom. Teaching is organized around the relevant content and not around any kind of syllabus. Thus, in CBI, content becomes the organizing principle of a language course syllabus as well as serving as the teaching material (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:205).

"Immersion Education", a submethod of CBI, was first developed in the 1970s, and defined by Richards and Rodgers (2001) as a type of language teaching which is realized through teaching the academic subjects in a target foreign language when the latter is the means of teaching and not the subject matter (2001:206). Several northern European countries have since the 1980s seen wide application of this approach in secondary and tertiary education in an attempt to extend the population's fluency in English (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:206-207).

Two further sub-methods can be identified within CBI – the Adjunct Language Instruction, when students are involved in two, linked courses, one for language and one for subject matter, both complementing each other; and the Sheltered Language Instruction**,** which deals with both native- and non-native-speaker students, taught by a specialist of the subject rather than by a native-speaker language teacher. This model offers considerable linguistic scaffolding and support to non-native-speaker students, accelerating the pace of learning so that they can catch up with their peers who are native in the target language and so as to prevent foreign students from delaying their involvement in the academic curriculum (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:217). By way of conclusion, it can be remarked that even though CBI offers many obvious advantages in the teaching/learning process – integrated skills teaching, increased learner motivation, authenticity of the teaching material – it also places a considerable burden on teachers, who were after all trained to teach language as a skill and not as subject content. Having to assume the roles of both a language as well as a subject teacher might be expected to result in the reduced efficiency of the teacher in both of his/her roles. Despite the challenges involved, however, CBI, based as it is on broad theoretical and teaching principles, can be used in many different useful ways. Hence, it continues to be a popular language teaching approach applied in many academic programs throughout the world (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 220).

2.4.3 Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emerged in the 1980s, is another method that belongs in the category of the Communicative Approach. Some claim that TBTL is just a "stronger version" of CLT, as it shares many of CLT's principles: the importance placed on authentic communication and the use of meaningful language for achieving meaningful tasks in a foreign language, for instance. However, what differentiates TBLT from CLT as well as from other communicative methods is the strong emphasis and reliance it places on the tasks "as the primary source of pedagogical input in teaching and the absence of a systematic grammatical or other type of syllabus" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:240). It sees the use of tasks as the key component of the teaching/ learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:255).

As TBLT is based on the belief that learners will be more successful and effective at learning when they are focused on a task to be achieved instead of concentrating their awareness upon the language itself, the central aim of this method becomes "engaging learners in different task work" (Richards 2001:223), tasks which are organized in the right sequence. Thus, in TBLT, language assumes an instrumental role; it becomes a means to the attainment of a communicative task goal, and is not an end in itself as seen in form-focused approaches, such as the Grammar Translation method.

Various definitions exist of what the word "task" exactly implies. According to Skehan (1996:20), "tasks are activities which have meaning as their primary focus"; according to Nunan (1989), "the task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulation, producing or interacting in the target language, while the attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (1989:10); for Prahbu (1987), a task is "an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control, to regulate that process" (1987:17). As the definition of the task allows a rather broad interpretation, the need to classify tasks according to their interactive and communicative values had to be dealt with. As a result, the following categories have been identified: jigsaw tasks, information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks, and opinion-exchange tasks (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001:234).

As for the activities undertaken in a TBLT classroom, most of them are whole-group work rather than individual learner activities, with students having to cooperate with others and take initiative in the learning process to achieve their task goals. As far as the teacher role is concerned, in a communicative lesson the teacher assumes the role of selecting the right tasks, adapting them to the group's needs and abilities, and transforming them into teaching resources (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 236). There is accordingly a lesser focus in this method on the teacher attending to or planning on the basis of individual student level or inclination. The teaching material in TBLT is similar to CLT material, with more orientation towards authentic tasks and a greater emphasis on the authenticity of materials used (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:233).

TBLT structure is the reverse of the PPP (Present, Practice, Produce) framework of Communicative Language Teaching. In TBLT, the lesson production phase comes first and the class "retraces" from there to the practice and presentation stages. In TBLT, there is a pre-task phase (preparation), a direct task phase (procedural and spontaneous), and a post-task phase (consolidation, follow-up, focus on the language, noticing exercises, reflection, repetition, etc.). Evaluation is an ongoing part of the study process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:238-239).

Even though Task-based Language Teaching has enjoyed popularity, it is still more widely used in a form of a 'technique' rather than a complete method in its own right. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), the issues related to TBLT, such as the accuracy of task "selection", "sequencing" and "evaluation" await further refinement and elaboration (2001:240).

2.5 SUMMARY AND POST METHOD PERSPECTIVES

2.5.1 Summary of the teaching methods

Over the past hundred years, the search for an efficient second or foreign language teaching method has been ongoing globally, and the constant substitution of one method for another, which each time has been believed to be a solution to the problems associated with the previous method, has been a common practice. For example, The Direct Method emerged (at the turn of the twentieth century) alongside the Grammar Translation method as a remedial method to address the limitations of the GT, which was strongly critisized in the early twentieth century in Europe (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:9). Later, in the 1950s, in the U.S., the Audio-Lingual Method was elaborated as a method which was thought to be more theory-grounded and thus equipped with better strategies for meeting modern-day, particularly adult professional, language learner needs. Fresh frustration with each method in turn following its initial enthusiastic acceptance eventually led to the era of innovation and experimentation in language teaching in the 1970s-1980s, resulting in the appearance of such truly alternative methods as Silent Way and Suggestopedia. Yet this era, too, turned out to be short-lived.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), even though such claimed "breakthrough" methods still tend to emerge from time to time, such as Task-Based Language Teaching, the method which has proved to be the most resilient has been Communicative Language Teaching:

> Mainstream Language Teaching on both sides of the Atlantic, however, opted for Communicative Language Teaching as the recommended method for language teaching in the 1980s. CLT continues to be considered the most plausible basis for language instruction today. (2001:244)

Despite the fact that Communicative Language Teaching has been proven to be much better than its predecessors at fulfilling present-day learners' language needs, what still needs to be considered is whether the development of the history of language teaching methods should be seen as a movement from the darkness into the light, as an evolutionary process, or not. Evidence to the contrary is forthcoming if we notice how often the principles and themes behind each 'new' method are being recycled and are reappearing in different forms, each time adding a slightly different perspective and taking different names. Perhaps the incessant changes that have been witnessed in the past two to three generations have not been that dramatic but rather frenetic after all.

Below, in Figure 2.5, is given a graphic representation of the nine dimensions that, according to Thorbury (2011:192), represent the main ideas and principles that underlie various language teaching methods. The principles are presented in a dichotomous pattern: the principles on the left of the diagram illustrate more form-focused, conservative approaches of foreign

language teaching (e.g. Grammar-Translation, Audio-Lingual), the principles on the right more communicative ones (e.g., Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based Teaching).

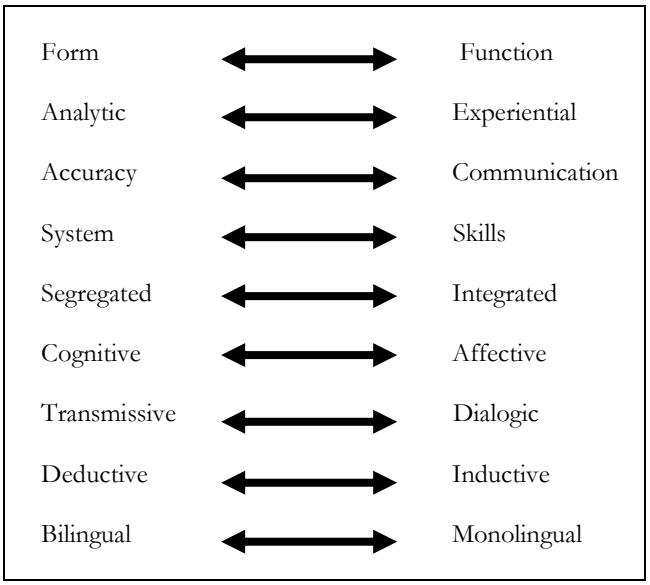

Figure 2.5: Nine dimensions of the principles underlying foreign language teaching methods (Thornbury, 2011: 129)

It has also been argued that, no matter what teaching methodology they claim they follow, it is the blend of the above principles (see Figure 2.5) that constitute many teachers' language teaching practice, resulting in a situation where the teacher does not employ any particular teaching method, but rather an eclectic approach of language instruction (Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Nunan, 1987). Such a generalized perception of language teaching methods, where the boundaries between them are rather blurred, in concert with the failure to find one single approach that would prove to be perfect, gradually led to the so-called "post-method era" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 244).

2.5.2 The post-method perspectives

Much disappointment with teaching methods that were once all the rage, and an appreciation of the fact that any language teaching method selected will have multiple purposes to serve and multiple contexts to be considered in order to achieve the desired outcome, led to the realization that it might be simply impossible to find an "all-purpose" teaching approach after all. Hence, instead of making renewed efforts to find yet another effective alternative method – which, it was now cynically expected, would lead to renewed failure without

breaking the vicious cycle of the neverending quest for methodological perfection – the search for an alternative to method itself began. This realization, at the end of the twentieth century, led to talk on the part of some linguists of the "death of methods" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 247) and, as Kumaravadivelu claims, led to the "post-method condition" in the field of language teaching (2008: 184). Kumaravadivelu describes the constant failure heretofore to find the perfect language teaching method in the following dramatic literary terms:

> For a very long time, our profession has been preoccupied with, or obsessed with, a search for the best method – very much like Monty Python searching for the Holy Grail. We went on expedition after expedition searching for the best method. But still, the Hole Grail was not in sight (2008: 164).

The quest for the "best method" described above is still ongoing. Thus, the method selected for research in this dissertation – CLT – has been selected not on the grounds of its having a 'perfect' nature, but rather due to its being the method currently recommended by the Government of Georgia as the mainstream teaching method for public as well as private schools across the country, capable of meeting the needs of Georgian language learners today. However, the legitimacy of this latter assumption needs to be tested, and it is hoped that the current investigation will make certain contribution in this direction.

Having looked at the history and the tendencies that have been taking place in the field of foreign language teaching, in the next chapter I narrow the focus to Communicative Language Teaching, looking into its theorecial basis as well as practical aspects related to its actual implementation.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

"Communicative Language Teaching marks the beginning of a major paradigm shift within language teaching in the twentieth century" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 151).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter discusses the general state of the art of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) around the world. In the previous chapter, the historical background of language teaching methodologies was provided and CLT was briefly discussed in the context of other teaching methods. Chapter 3 focuses more narrowly on CLT and provides detailed information, research findings and summaries of the debates and discussions about this method.

As already mentioned, CLT was devised as an alternative to other methods that had existed before the 1970s-80s and that had proved to be inefficient and unsuitable to modern language learners' demands. In an attempt to find a better alternative to methods such as the Grammar Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, the proponents of what became CLT engaged during the 1970s in active research and in elaborating a new and unique language teaching approach which would better serve people's modern-day language necessities. As a result, a great deal of research and literature was produced on this topic in this period. This probably explains the fact that even in modern literature about CLT many references are made to findings and information made available some decades ago. Reference to some rather dated literature presented in this chapter, alongside the more recent research findings about CLT, was inevitable, as this information reflects the basics and fundamental principles upon which CLT is built.

Chapter overview

The following Section 3.2 provides a general background to CLT. Section 3.3 deals with the theories of language and learning that CLT rests upon; the most important linguists, the so-called 'founding fathers' of CLT, who contributed to laying grounds to this method, are referred to and their theories are presented and laid alongside each other in this section. Section 3.4 is concerned with describing CLT-compatible course design and syllabus format. Section 3.5 describes the teachers' and Section 3.6 the learners' roles in the CLT class. Section 3.7 is about CLT activities and classroom interaction, whereas Section 3.8 deals with CLT teaching materials. Section 3.9 is about the criticism that has been voiced regarding CLT and Section 3.10 is concerned with CLT-related

challenges identified in various teaching contexts. The final Section 3.11 provides a summary and the concluding comments for the chapter.

3.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND TO CLT

Even though the value of language as a means of communication has always been recognized, the questioning of our understanding of "real communication" and the emergence of criticism of the ways used to develop Communicative Competence in language learners only came in the English Language Teaching field (ELT) in the late 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 153).

The origins and stimulus for the emergence of CLT can be traced back to the theories of the Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884-1942) and his fellow British linguist John Firth (1890–1960). It was Firth who first emphasized the importance of focusing on the language in its "sociocultural context" and language discourse (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 158). The ideas of Malinowski and Firth influenced the linguistic theories of the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1927–2009) and the Bristish linguist Michael Halliday (1925), and they further contributed to the development and adoption of CLT in the language teaching field (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 158).

In Britain, CLT appeared at a time when British teaching of foreign languages, particularly in state secondary schools, was ready for a fundamental change. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT emerged when the dissatisfaction with the existing method called Situational Language Teaching reached its peak and the need for a better alternative was strongly felt (2001: 153). In the rapid socio-cultural shifts of the late 1960s, in Britain, Situational Language Teaching was perceived as incompatible with the language teaching/learning needs and requirements of the 1970s. In the United States, in the same era, the emergence of CLT was a reaction to the great dissatisfaction towards the Audio-Lingual Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 153).

One of the important factors that contributed to the popularization of Communicative Language Teaching was the necessity arising in the 1970s-80s to have more adults learn foreign languages all over Europe, which would allow better inter-country communication. Thus, adequate measures were taken by the Council of Europe to transform language teaching throughout the continent by actively supporting all activities aimed at improving the quality of foreign language instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:154). The efforts of the Council of Europe motivated researchers to produce works defining a theoretical foundation for the communicative approach in language teaching, which were promptly adopted by all agents involved in language teaching field development: textbook writers, curriculum developers, language teachers as well as by the governments "nationally and internationally". All this led to the wide employment of what is now known as "the Communicative Teaching Approaches" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:154).

3.3 THEORETICAL BASIS OF CLT

As already mentioned above (Setion 2.1), CLT has a broad theoretical background, which allows for more freedom of choice and action, as well as various interpretations of its principles, at the practical as well as theoretical level than any other method permits (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 155). Because of its "comprehensive" nature, CLT is perceived by some "as an approach (and not a method)" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:155). Savignon (2002) describes CLT as being based on a "multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at the least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research" (2002:4). According to Howatt, there are two versions of CLT: "a strong version" and "a weak version":

> The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching. The 'strong version' of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it' (Howatt, 1984:279).

The version of CLT officially proposed as a recommended foreign language teaching method in Georgia can be considered to be a "weak" one (based on the characteristics provided in the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia; for more discussion, see Chapter 6). Consequently, the descriptions and characteristics that the sections below (3.3 - 3.8) provide are those inherent in the "weak version" of CLT.

3.3.1 Language theories

Communicative Language Teaching derives from "a theory of language as communication", and consequently, the primary goal of language teaching according to CLT is providing language learners with the ability of authentic communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:159). Below, there follow brief descriptions of language theories proposed by the 'founding fathers' of CLT. It was these theories that contributed to enhancing and further expanding the existing theoretical assumptions about language learning, and thereby played a crucial role in laying a solid ground for the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching.

Noam Chomsky (born 1928)

As regards the theoretical basis of CLT, one of the greatest contributions made was by the American linguist Noam Chomsky, who, in his book *Syntactic Structure* (1957), first started opposing the theories of structural linguistics and behavioural psychology upon which the previous language teaching methods (Situational Language Teaching, for example) had been based (Llurda, 2000:86). He argued that the existing theories did not capture the creative nature of language learning, the ways humans are able to come up with language forms and structures they have never heard or seen before. Chomsky argued that similarly creative, rather than linear and unitary, perspective needs to be adopted as far as language theory is concerned (cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001:153).

Chomsky was influenced by the earlier theories put forward by a Swiss linguist and semiotician de Saussure (1857–1913), who was first to draw clear lines between what he called "langue" and "parole"; the former referring to the language system and the latter to the actual act of language use (Guy, 1996:12). According to Guy (1996), "Saussures's distinction between langue and parole has now largely been subsumed by Chomsky's contrast between competence and performance" (1996:11). Guy further observes that Chomsky was even more radical in his definitions of what constitutes language competence and performance than Saussure had been. According to Chomsky, language competence is an abstract ability that all language learners are in possession of innately, and equals to grammatical competence, that is, "the abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language", not in an explicit but an implicit manner (Chomsky, 1965:3). As for "performance", Chomsky describes it as a less idealized process of application of the language knowledge in actual communication (Chomsky, 1965:3), and remarks that it "surely cannot constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics, if this is to be a serious discipline" (1965:4).

Chomsky's theories were important, as they triggered much interest in the field of linguistics and stimulated further research to make the theory of Communicative Competence more elaborate and complete (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:158; Llurda, 2000:86). Scholars who further advanced Chomsky's ideas were Dell Hymes, Michael Halliday and Henry Widdowson. These were the scholars who started advocating making use of the social, functional and communicative potential of the language in classroom teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:153). Their contributions will be discussed in the remainder of this section.

Dell Hymes (1927–2009)

Dell Hymes became famous for his theories of language as communication in 1972. He sought to build upon the theories proposed by Chomsky regarding how language competence could be interpreted, which, according to Hymes, bore a somewhat incomprehensive and idealized character (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:159). Unlike Chomsky, Hymes thought that it was not right to focus on language learners' abstract language abilities, measured through "ideal" situations, nor to limit language competence to grammatical abilities only; grammatical competence – morphology, syntax, lexis and phonology, according to Hymes– is just the first step towards overall language competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:159). Thus, Hymes held that competence in a foreign language needed to be defined in broader terms. He added the adjective "communicative" to the word "competence", creating the term Communicative Competence (1972), a concept incorporating, alongside grammatical competence, discourse and socio-cultural language competences. According to Hymes, what is implied by knowing a language (Savignon, 2002:2) is the development of Communicative Competence, in the complete sense of the term, including all the components that real life communication is comprised of (for a more detailed discussion on Communicative Competence, see Section 3.3.3).

Michael Halliday (born 1925)

Another source of influence on the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, which complemented well the linguistic theories Hymes elaborated, is the British functional linguist Halliday with his "functional account of language use" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:159). According to Halliday, "linguistics... is concerned ...with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meaning, brought into focus" (1970:145). Halliday (1975) wrote important books and articles about the functional value of the language, which he divides into seven categories: "1. Instrumental 2. Regulatory 3. Interactional 4. Personal 5. Heuristic 6. Imaginative 7. Representational. Thus, according to Halliday, language teaching/learning also has to involve focus on these functions in order to extract maximum benefit from the experience (Halliday, 1975:11-17). According to Widdowson (2007), Haliday's views differ from those of Hymes's in that whereas the former is concerned with the "relationship between the internal semantic functions encoded in the language as meaning potential", the former deals with "the external functions of language as pragmatic realizations of this potential" (Widdowson, 2007: 218).

Henry Widdowson (born 1935)

Widdowson is a prominent British linguist best known for his contribution to the theory of Communicative Language Teaching. He came up with the terms language usage and language use, referring to the two aspects of communicative performance, and making a clear distinction between the two — the former representing the ability to produce correct sentences, or manifestations of the linguistic system, and the latter being concerned with the ability to use the knowledge of the rules for effective communication (Widdowson, 1978:3). These notions correspond to Chomskian ideas about linguistic competence and performance. Widdowson goes even further and distinguishes two different kinds of meaning attached to usage and use: 'signification' and 'value'; the former being defined as "the meaning attached to a sentence as an instance of language usage, isolated from context, whereas the latter implies the meaning taken by a sentence when it is put to use for communicative purposes" (Widdowson, 1978:10-12).

According to Hymes, children acquire knowledge of socio-cultural rules such as "when to speak, when not, what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner", together with the ability to produce grammatically accurate speech (Hymes, 1972:277). Widdowson, taking up Hymes's viewpoint, rejects the idea that once the linguistic knowledge is acquired, communication abilities will automatically be taken care of, and strongly recommends that communication skills be developed alongside the acquisition of linguistic knowledge. Thus, Widdowson suggests that the classroom should be providing opportunities for knowledge acquisition in tandem with language practice. Furthermore, language practice activities must be at the service of natural communication skills development rather than aimed at the attainment of theoretical knowledge about the language only (Widdowson, 1978:4-10); language teaching material ought to be chosen according to the potential of language use rather than usage that it can provide (1978:12-15).

3.3.2 Theories of learning underlying CLT

Having examined the theories of language which paved the way for CLT, we now turn to analyzing the theories of language learning underlying this method. Here it should be noted that as far as learning and teaching are concerned, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT does not adhere to one particular theory only. Rather CLT draws theories about learning and teaching from a wide range of areas such as cognitive science, educational psychology and second language acquisition (SLA). Thus, it encompasses and combines many different approaches and points of view about language learning and teaching (Richards & Rogers, 2001:161). According to Breen and Candlin (1980:95), language teaching should be providing opportunities for "expression", "negotiation" and "interpretation"; however, teaching grammar

should not be neglected either, as the combination of both – conscious learning of language forms (accuracy) and spontaneous, fluency-oriented practice – is believed in this model to be contributory to language learning (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006:119). "Meaningfulness" and "authenticity" of the activities and tasks, are also regarded as one of the key factors affecting the efficiency of language learning for communicative purposes (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:161; Kumaravadivelu, 2006:118). With regard to learning theories underlying CLT Widdowson (1978:207-215) concludes that even though there are many scholars who are considered to be in support of CLT as far as the theory of learning is concerned (e.g., Krashen), there is no direct link or evidence that CLT principles originate from the theories of these scholars and that their origin remains open to speculation. In line with Widdowson, Richards and Rodgers (2001) claim that theories of learning underlying CLT can be "discerned" only in some of its practices.

3.3.3 The concept of Communicative Competence

"*There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless"* (Hymes, 1972:278).

The perception of "what it means to 'know' a language" has widened as a result of the developments in the field of sociolinguistics (Mitchell, 1994:34) as well as in response to the new demands placed on foreign language teaching and learning that emerged starting in the 1970s (for more discussion of this, see Section 2.4). Thus, it became necessary to specify which competences exactly language learners needed to have in a foreign language in order to function effectively in real-life settings. Many applied linguists have given their own valuable contributions to defining what exactly competence in communication means. The exact definition of Communicative Competence has caused much debate among scholars. According to Savignon:

> It [Communicative Competence] is a way of describing what it is a native speaker knows which enables him to interact effectively with other native speakers. This kind of interaction is, by definition, spontaneous, i.e. unrehearsed. (Savignon 1976:4)

As it can be seen from the quote above, it is the "native speaker" characteristics that Savignon considers indispensible for being communicatively competent in a foreign language. According to Richards (2006), being communicatively competent implies "mastering" linguistic forms as well as acquiring an ability for real-life communication, the latter competence being the more important than the former (Richards, 2006:3). According to Saville-Troike (2006), Communicative Competence means "everything that a speaker needs to know in order to communicate appropriately within a particular community"

(2006:134). Below, the contributions of those whose theoretical reflections and work have had the most effect on the theory of Communicative Competence will be briefly discussed.

As mentioned above, it was Hymes (1972) who first came up with the term Communicative Competence to demonstrate his reaction against Chomsky's (1965) definition of language competence and of the distinction between linguistic competence and performance (see also Section 3.2). Consequently, Hymes's attempts resulted in a broadening of the understanding of language competence, "bringing sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence" (Bagaric, 2007:95).

The further extension of Hymes's definition of Communicative Competence was reflected in the work of Canale and Swain (1980) who provided a more sophisticated, widely-accepted model of Communicative Competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), Communicative Competence breaks down into four main components: Grammatical Competence, implying knowledge of the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon of a language; Socio-cultural Competence, which means understanding the language in its cultural context, control of speech and writing styles appropriate to different situations, and a knowledge of the rules of politeness; Discourse Competence, aimed at developing the learner's knowledge of the rules governing the structure of longer texts (cohesion and coherence); and Strategic Competence, an ability to avoid communication breakdown – introducing coping strategies which can keep communication going when language knowledge is still imperfect (Canale & Swain, 1983:5). A more recent survey of Communicative Competence by Bachman (1990) divides it into the broad headings of "organizational competence", which includes both grammatical and discourse (or textual) competence, and "pragmatic competence", which includes both sociolinguistic and "illocutionary" competence (Bachman, 1990:6). A graphical representation of Communicative Competence and its constituent parts, offered by Verhoeven and Vermeer (1992), is presented in Figure 3.1 below.

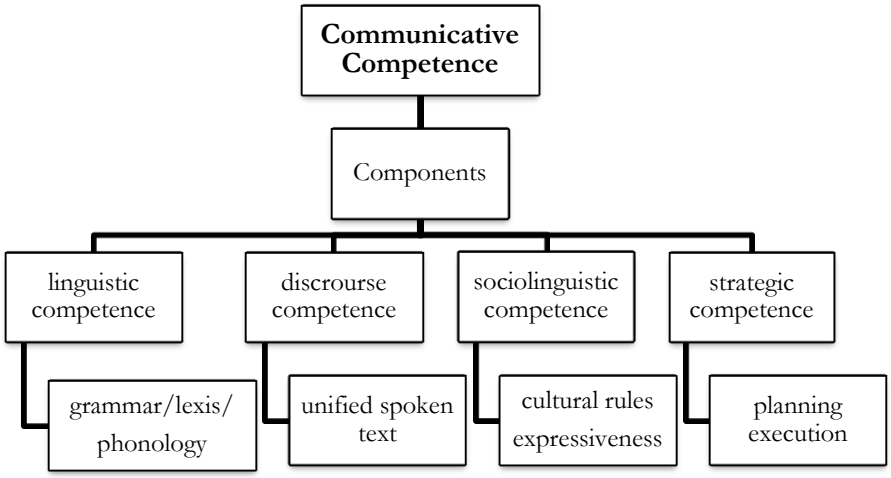

Figure 3.1: Framework for describing Communicative Competence (Pillar, 2011:6)

The broadening of the concept of what Communicative Competence embraces led to more comprehensive language teaching/learning goals, which from then on have aimed not only to provide students with the rules of linguistic usage, but also to prepare them for real-life communication (Widdowson, 1978:3), as knowledge of the forms of a language alone is, in most cases, insufficient (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:128).

Having defined Communicative Competence and its various interpretations, it is also equally important to determine how to develop this ability in language learners, and how to encourage communicative teaching in the classroom. According to Mitchell (1994), in order to be effective in acquiring Communicative Competence in a language, it is necessary to have all four language skills developed almost simultaneously (1994:34). Even though certain skills work is done in more form-focused language teaching besides, it is the approach taken and the communicative value intended to be exploited in the process through appropriate tasks that matters. "Pseudo-skills work" is therefore how such activities are regarded as listening to or reading unauthentic texts (for reading and listening skills improvement); repeating sentences, reciting texts by heart (for speaking skill improvement), or writing dictations (for writing skill improvement). It is clear that not much communicative value can be derived from such quasi-skills-oriented activities. Also, out of the four language skills, in order to improve learners' communicative competence, Widdowson (1978) emphasizes the importance of focusing on listening and speaking skills, and on making the tasks as authentic as possible (1978:57-61). Widdowson further argues that even though some activities which might seem to have less communicative value at first glance can actually be exploited in

such a way that their communicative properties and benefit become obvious (Widdowson, 1978:61-64).

According to Savignon (1976:5), in order to encourage communicative language teaching in the classroom, it is important to adopt tests that measure learners' Communicative Competence in an appropriate manner. Having a relevant testing system in place, in Savignon's opinion, serves as a great motivating factor and sends the right message to students (Savignon, 1976:5). She adds: "If we teach for Communicative Competence, we have to test for Communicative Competence" (Savignon, 1976:6; for more discussion on CLT-compatible assessment approaches, see Section 10.2.3).

Having discussed the theoretical background of Communicative Language Teaching, I now turn to describing the properties of this method manifested at the pratical and procedural level.

3.4 COURSE DESIGN AND SYLLABUS

The primary preoccupation of the course designers promoting CLT is to cater to the needs of concrete groups of students. In CLT, the emphasis is not only on the teaching methodology – *how* to teach a foreign language – but also on teaching material – *what* to teach. Consequently, the contents of the course has to be selected and organized in such a way that it suits and satisfies the language learners' needs and interests (Littlewood, 1981:78-79). Language skills – reading, writing, speaking, listening – have to be prioritized, as it is through language skills that a target foreign language can be exploited in real practice. Also, the course should be developed around the aspects of Communicative Competence (see Section 3.3.3 above): whereas at the lower levels the linguistic aspect of Communicative Competence might be emphasized, at higher levels the focus needs to shift towards development of more subtle components of Communicative Competence, which are strategic, discourse and sociolinguistic competences (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:163).

As for the syllabus, this is an aspect that has always had great importance in CLT. Littlewood discusses the changes that took place on the way to developing a communicative syllabus. He talks about three main types of communicative syllabi: the Functional Syllabus, which is a communicative syllabus based on language functions (Brumfit, 1980); the Notional Syllabus,[1] which draws attention to language notions (Wilkins, 1976), such as ways of expressing quantity, future time, and deals with different topics relevant to

[1] The Notional Syllabus by Wilkins was further expanded and elaborated by the Council of Europe. The descriptions of the situations that common European citizens might find themselves in, topics that they might need to talk about and language functions they were likely to need, together with grammar and vocabulary, were included in this syllabus. Arising from this syllabus, the book *Threshold Level English* was published by Van Ek and Alexander in 1980.

students' needs and interests (Van Ek & Alexander, 1980); and the Combination Syllabus, which is based on a combination of different organizational principles (Littlewood, 1981). A more elaborate list of CLT syllabi has been proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2001:164) and is presented below:

Table 3.1: Summary of CLT syllabi propounded

Classification of communicative syllabi types
1. Structures and functions
2. Functional spiral around structure
3. Structural functional, instrumental
4. Functional
5. Notional
6. Interactional
7. Task-based
8. Learner-generated

The syllabus issue in CLT has caused many debates and differences in opinion. This dissension arises from the fact that students' having a list of things to be learned, no matter whether it is a list of grammatical structures or functions and notions, restricts the freedom, spontaneity and flexibility of instruction, the very aspect of language teaching that CLT tries to promote (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:165). Even though interactional, task-based and learner-generated syllabi would seem to provide much more freedom of action and spontaneity in the lesson, there is, according to the most radical critics, no need for any pre-determined syllabus at all, as the specific requirements of a concrete group of learners have to be the basis for a tailor-made syllabus. According to Mitchell, the 'one-size-fits-all' type of approach has proved to be inefficient before (1994:37). Thus, an ideal syllabus "consists of well-selected experiences and the learning materials, which need to be developed on the basis of the particular needs manifested by the class" (Applebee 1974:119, 150).

However, the above arguments have their critics as well. Opponents argue that while a tailor-made syllabus might prove efficient with adult learners, who know the exact purpose of their language learning, the same type of approach will not work at a school level, with many teenagers demonstrating little or no motivation to learn a language (Breen, 1987:82). Consequently, the issue of the communicative syllabus remains open and subject to debate.

3.5 TEACHER ROLES

Compared to earlier methods, in Communicative Language Teaching, the teacher's traditional role is dramatically different from the one adopted in more grammar-driven teaching (Littlewood, 1981:91). A CLT teacher is no more the center of attention and the focus has shifted to the learner and his/her needs.

Also, in CLT, the traditional role of the teacher as 'knowledge provider' is changed into that of 'resource provider' and 'rehearsal monitor', providing learners with the right language input and resources as well as supervising the language practice process (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005:340). In CLT, teacher talking time is considerably reduced as compared with that of a traditional language instructor (Littlewood, 1981:92); he/she acts as "a facilitator" and "a classroom process manager", setting up activities, ensuring that planned activities proceed smoothly from one stage to the next, and leading discussions and debates (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005:340).

The CLT teacher observes or monitors activities without interfering too much. As Littlewood points out, in the natural environment foreign language acquisition takes place quite successfully without any teacher involvement. According to Littlewood (2006), although it does not mean that teachers are useless, it should also be noted that "learning does not only take place as a direct result of the teacher's instruction. There are some aspects of learning that can take place more efficiently if, once the teacher has initiated an activity, he/she takes no further part in it" (Littlewood, 1981:92).

Despite little involvement on the teacher's part in communicative activities, there are times in CLT lessons when the instructor might assume the role of 'co-communicator' and might become involved in the process of a discussion or a debate, contributing personal ideas and attitudes, and thus giving the whole communication process a more authentic and stimulating nature. This type of teacher intervention usually has a positive effect on the general classroom atmosphere in a communicative lesson.

Another important function that the teacher performs in the CLT classroom is providing feedback to students. Thus, other roles that a CLT teacher assumes, which are very different from the traditional ones and bear considerable importance for successful CLT implementation, are those of 'feedback provider' and 'error corrector'. As Littlewood (1981) points out "[i]f the teacher consistently corrects linguistic forms, this indicates that the success is now being measured by formal criteria, and that the learner should therefore focus his attention (partly or wholly) on the production of correct linguistic forms (1981:90-91).

Since CLT puts the main emphasis on communicating the meaning, and focus on the form, though significant, is of secondary importance, it is essential that the feedback the teacher gives be primarily a reaction to a message the learner has conveyed. According to Coskun (2011), in CLT errors are considered as natural phenomena in the process of learning a language, and practicing too much error correction, as was done in previous language teaching models, is considered to be discouraging for students, hindering the process of natural communication (2011:4).

Another function of the teacher in the CLT classroom is that of 'needs analyst'. It is the teacher who should find out what his/her students are trying

to learn and for what purposes, and then adequately cater to these needs. Other roles that the CLT teacher might assume are that of 'advisor', 'organizer of resources' and a resource himself/herself (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:167).

3.6 LEARNER ROLES

As Communicative Language Teaching is a learner-centered language teaching method, there are quite a few roles that students assume in the study process: that of 'communicator' and 'manager of their own learning', for example (Larsen-Freeman, 2004:129). As Harmer remarks, "learners should take as much responsibility for their own learning as teachers do for their teaching" (Harmer, 2003:291). Breen and Candlin define the learner's role as "a negotiator between self, the learning process and the object of learning" (1980:110).

As CLT is aimed at promoting learner autonomy, the cooperative rather than the competitive mode of interaction is encouraged among learners in the classroom. Students are given freedom to express themselves freely and the idea of the learner as an active and unique individual with unique needs, interests and styles is stressed (Lee, 1998:282). Even though encouraging the learner's independence and self-instruction sounds like an efficient idea to many specialists and experts, CLT is the subject of criticism by others on these very grounds (see Section 3.9).

3.7 COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION

According to Johnson and Morrow (1981) a truly communicative activity is characterized by three features: existence of the information gap, free choice of action in the study process and an opportunity to give and receive feedback during the communication (cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000:129). If there is no information gap between speakers, if in the process of communication speakers do not have free choice to decide what they are going to say and how, and if there is no opportunity for the listener to provide feedback to what his/her interlocutor is saying, then real communication will not take place (Larsen-Freeman, 2000:129). Consequently, highly controlled activities, such as chain drills, substitution drills, or pre-formed question and answer patterns, fail to provide real communication opportunities to students, restricting their freedom of choice and plunging them in a quasi-communicative situation. Conversely, activities such as role-plays, simulations, problem-solving, information gap activities, games, jigsaw activities, discussions and debates promote communicative language practice.

Littlewood (1981) classifies communicative language activities into two categories: functional communication activities, such as 'find the differences' exercises, following directions, and crosswords; and social interaction activities,

such as discussions, debates, dialogues and simulations. Whereas the former type of activities are mostly aimed at promoting accuracy and are focused on form, social interaction activities are fluency-oriented and provide much freedom in the process of communication to the learner (Littlewood, 1981:22, 43).

As for classroom interaction, in the CLT class this shifts from a teacher-student to a student-student pattern. The teacher is no longer the center of attention in the lesson and most of the activities are carried out in pairs/groups. This type of interaction has a number of advantages in the study process: it helps shift the class's attention from the teacher onto learners, and to enhance communication among students and maximize their interaction time. Moreover, according to Coskun (2011), pair/group work provides peer-teaching opportunities, which is highly beneficial for language acquisition (Coskun, 2011:87). Also, as Thompson suggests, pair/group work activities lead to more meaningful language production on the learners' part (1996:12), as in pairs and groups students have direct communication and are given a chance to be involved in the process of peer-evaluation and feedback provision with regard to the meaning, rather than just the form, of the languages (Rao, 1996:465). Pair/group work also provides learners with plenty of time for rehearsal before having to perform in front of the whole class, which can be quite an intimidating and daunting experience for most students. Thus, pair/group work helps boost learners' self-confidence and lower their anxiousness in the process of learning. One more advantage that can be attributed to pair/group work in the CLT class is the cooperative and a pleasant atmosphere that this interaction pattern promotes, thereby contributing to students' feeling comfortable and at ease while involved in the study process.

3.8 TEACHING MATERIAL

Since the need to teach languages for communication has become obvious and the goal of language teaching has emphasized developing communicative proficiency in language learners, the designers of language materials, in order to make their products more relevant and appealing, have started accommodating as many principles of Communicative Language Teaching as possible. The range of teaching materials available today consists of coursebooks, teacher's books, workbooks, supplementary resources, audio and video materials, Internet resources and other authentic materials (Rossener, 1988:143-144). Each material should be exploited in different ways and for different purposes in order to efficiently supplement one another. If rightly selected, teaching material can help boost learners' motivation and interest, and increase the degree of their involvement in the study process, which is essential for making language learning process efficient (Rossener, 1988:143). As Rossener (1988) observes "[m]aterials themselves have not suddenly become 'communicative'; rather, materials have become more and more varied as the drive for more and

more interesting, and less and less constraining ways of carrying out language 'practice' in the classroom has gathered pace" (1988:142).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) sort teaching resources into three categories: text-based, task-based and realia (2001:168). Various coursebooks present different types of texts, normally revolving around one given topic that seems relevant to the interests of the particular age group that the book is aimed at. Some of these texts represent a more or less traditional format, whereas others can take the form of just a picture, a visual cue or a sentence fragment aimed at initiating conversation among students. As for the task-based materials used in a communicative lesson, these are mostly games, role-plays and other resources students work on in pairs or groups. The use of authentic materials is believed to promote learners' communicative proficiency the most. They can be exploited for conveying the meaning, focusing on form as well as emphasizing the cultural value of the language (Spelleri, 2002:16). Authentic materials are also the ones that learners find most enjoyable, which increase their motivation best and provide natural communication opportunities in the artificial context of the language classroom (Nunan, 1999:212).

3.9 A CRITICAL LOOK AT COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Even though the positive impact of CLT on foreign language teaching has been recognized by many language professionals, nevertheless, as the initial wave of enthusiasm around Communicative Language Teaching has subsided, some of the claims of this approach have been looked at more critically. Swan was rather harsh in his remarks with regard to CLT as early as in 1985:

> As the approach matures we become more conscious of its limitations, and identify issues in our current practice which require debate and experimentation. It [CLT] makes exaggerated claims for the power and novelty of its doctrines; it misrepresents the currents of thought it has replaced; it is often characterized by serious intellectual confusion; it is choked with jargon. (1985:2)

Below follows a discussion of some of the most frequently criticized aspects of Communicative Language Teaching identified in the relevant literature.

3.9.1 Aimed at developing language fluency, not accuracy

Communicative Language Teaching is criticized by some for focusing predominantly on developing fluency in language learners and for widely ignoring language accuracy (Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012:28). Gatbon and Segalowitz

suggest that while focusing on the development of fluency in learners, the application of form-focused activities is also vital (2005:328). They argue that students very often, while involved in communication, do not notice form-related mistakes that they make and need to be provided with some repetition opportunities, and even grammar explanations in some cases (Gatbon & Segalowitz, 2005:341). The same view is shared by Hammerly, who illustrates this weakness of communicative approach by referring to French immersion courses, where, after several years of immersion in language programs, learners still do not live up to the expected levels of accuracy (1987:395, 399). Moreover, in some cultures whose local language is very different structurally from the foreign language that is being learned, students feel that they benefit greatly from learning rules and understanding the different system of the target foreign language: "We would like to know what happens, because if we understand the system, we can use English more effectively" (Harvey, 1985:183).

3.9.2 Non-academic teaching method, focused on the oral aspect of the language

According to Henry Widdowson (2007), the idea of CLT was so appealing at the time when it appeared that it was promptly adopted by a number of teachers without giving much thought to what it really was about, leading to the oversimplification of CLT and its perception as simply a means of teaching everyday communication (2007:217). Thus, another argument against CLT is that it is a largely oral approach, and that the skills of reading and writing are marginalized, rather than being reimagined as components of the overall approach (Mitchell, 1994:41). Consequently, such a method might be regarded as non-academic, one aimed at developing speaking skills mainly.

3.9.3 Unnecessary focus on meta-linguistic skills

According to Swan, the *tabula rasa* attitude – a "belief that students do not possess, or cannot transfer from their mother tongue, normal communication skills" – is one of the drawbacks of CLT (1985:10). He observes that in the CLT classroom, it sometimes happens that during a speaking activity there is a predominant focus on "conversational strategies (a therapeutical procedure which might seem more relevant to the teaching of psycho-social disorders than to language instruction)", as well as on discourse and meta-language analysis, language input provision thus being the least important aspect in the study process. Swan finishes his argument by stating about such a CLT lesson: "it is in fact by no means clear what language teaching is going on here, if any at all" (1985:10-11).

Teaching metalinguistic language skills, according to Swan, is unnecessary, since these are the skills learners are already in possession of in their mother tongue. For example, while learners are doing a reading activity, in CLT the focus can be on teaching them how to adopt the following strategies: prediction, skimming and scanning, in the sense of deduction. But if one knows how to scan a text in one's native language, this skill can easily be transferred into the target foreign language. Certainly, if the learner is too young to benefit from the cross-reference to his/her mother tongue, or is not in possession of such linguistic skills or strategies in his/her own language either, then additional support might be given in that area, the experience which will result in metalinguistic ability acquisition (Swan, 1985:10).

Another accusation that Swan puts forward against CLT is its underestimating the value of lexis and overestimating the importance of "appropriateness" in language teaching (Swan, 1985:7). In many cases, it is a lack of lexical knowledge and not an ignorance of the rules of the abstract concept of "appropriateness" that accounts for the inability of most students to come up with acceptable utterances. Contrary to Widdowson's assumption, Swan believes that for learners with common sense and life experience, it is naturally comprehensible what is meant by a concrete utterance, as long as the structural and lexical meaning is clear (Swan, 1985:3–4).

3.9.4 CLT and local contexts

According to Coskun (2011), as CLT is a Western-born method that has spread all around the world, its application might be challenging in some contexts not only because of the teachers' perception and attitudes but also due to certain cultural factors. Techniques and teaching methods pioneered in a largely Western context should not be exported uncritically to other learning/teaching contexts, as evidence abounds to indicate that while CLT might be extremely efficient in western environments, it might be totally useless in non-Western ones (Coskun, 2011:92; Li, 1998:677).

In Asian countries, for example, the culture of learning, generally, is perceived as a process of knowledge accumulation rather than as a process of using the acquired knowledge for practical purposes immediately (Littlewood, 2007:245). Consequently, there exist certain conflicting perceptions between the general Asian culture of learning and the underpinnings of CLT (Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004:253). In the Chinese culture, it is considered to be inappropriate for a student to be active in the lesson and mistakes must not be tolerated; students are supposed to be quiet and obedient and should not ask questions.Thus, the language class might be the only place in a Chinese school where pupils may take an active role in the lesson, whereas the same behaviour would still be considered unacceptable in other classes, which might be confusing for learners (Li, 1998:691). Below are presented some comments about CLT by the teachers from non-Western backgrounds:

A Japanese teacher:

> If I do group work or open-ended communicative activities, the students and other colleagues will feel that I am not really teaching them. They will feel that I didn't have anything really planned for the lesson and that I'm filling in time.

An Egyptian teacher:

> When I present a reading text to the class, the students expect me to go through it word by word and explain every point of vocabulary or grammar: They would be uncomfortable if I left it for them to work it out on their own or if I asked them just to try to understand the main ideas. (cited in Richards, 2011:1)

According to Bax (2003), teaching has to be constructed around analyzing the context in the first place, and only afterwards deciding on an appropriate methodology for each particular context. This is why it is highly advisable that on CLT training courses teachers are trained not only in methodology, but also in dealing with contextual challenges as the most important skill in language teaching (Bax, 2003:285). Widdowson (2007) reveals a comparable attitude towards the importance of the context for language teaching: "Although in the past there was a tendency to think of it [CLT] in global terms, it can only really exist through how it is locally interpreted and realized" (2007:219).

Harmer agrees with Bax in that he finds "the wholesale adoption of practices from one culture into another totally dissimilar one is a mistake", and elaborates, that teachers cannot arbitrarily take up any cultural tradition or norm in which they find themselves. Teachers must not be "merely reactive" and let go of their moral position about the ways in which knowledge can be acquired (Harmer, 2003:293). What he suggests is achieving some compromise between the teaching on the one hand and students on the other, so that neither teachers nor students have to surrender their beliefs, but rather find "the golden middle", where methodology and context "meet in the way that is most appropriate for all concerned" (Harmer, 2003:294).

Ultimately, despite the context-related challenges discussed above, it is not the case that the transfer of CLT from Western to non-Western educational contexts cannot be beneficial. According to Harmer (2003), problems in relation to CLT usually arise not from the methodology itself, but from the inability to adapt and amend it to fit the needs of a particular group in a particular context (Harmer, 2003:292). As Larsen-Freeman (2000) comments, by being intolerant towards imported methods "we may fail to understand the cause of the problem and run the risk of overacting and losing something valuable in the process" (2000:67), which might lead to falling behind in education developments and result in the "deskilling of teachers" (Hiep, 2007:196).

3.9.5 Too demanding towards teachers as well as learners

Some psycho-cignitive arguments have been put forward against CLT as well. Stratton (1977), in her article – *Putting Communicative Syllabus in its Place* – argues that the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing the communicative syllabus largely depends on the age, cognitive development and the language proficiency level of the learner. According to Stratton (1977), and based on the theories proposed by Piaget (1971), a communicative syllabus can be very demanding, if not unrealistic for beginner learners, and in particular for the youngest, in the age range of five to twelve years. For this group of learners, decent Communicative Competence and speaking techniques are beyond their capacities even in their own language; thus, it is highly probable that a communicative syllabus will prove inefficient with their regard (1977:138). In these circumstances, as Stratton further recommends, employing a structural/situational syllabus at an initial stage, and only later introducing a communicative one, would seem a rational decision. At a later stage, Stratton suggests, "reversing the balance" and making the communicative character of the syllabus more prominent and applying the structural approach only for "remedial purposes" seems more practical (1997:138).

Some other critics of CLT claim that this method relies too much on the students' self-sufficiency and sense of responsibility in order to achieve success in the language learning process. Thus, for the successful implementation of this method, we need to have an extremely motivated and dedicated group of learners, which is not always the case (Harmer, 2003:291). Littlewood makes the following comments in this regard:

> Many of the teachers may not find these particular procedures sufficiently appealing to sustain the engagement of any but the most motivated or serious-minded of their students. (Littlewood, 2008:216)

To conclude, according to the critics, the younger, less motivated and less proficient in the target foreign language the group is, the less likely it is that the application of CLT will be successful.

3.9.6 CLT-related ambiguity

Another aspect of CLT that has troubled some critics is its ambiguous nature. As many researchers have argued, CLT is more of an approach than a concrete method, leaving much space for teachers to interpret things in their own way, which often leads to misinterpretations and misunderstandings of the main principles of CLT on the teachers' part (Mangubhai, 2005:33). Evidence confirming the above assumption abounds in the literature dealing with the theoretical and practical aspects of CLT. Mitchell's in-depth investigation of 59 CLT teachers in Scotland, an experiment by Karavas-Doukas (1996) involving

39 teachers, and Sato and Kleinsasses' (1999) study with 10 Japanese teachers, all revealed that it is quite frequent for teachers' inconsistent understandings of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT to lead to a similarly confused and eclectic type of teaching.

However, there are also a number of studies (Gatbon & Segalowitz, 2005; Savignon, 2002; Thompson, 1996; Williams, 1995; Whitley, 1993; Rollmann, 1994; Nunan, 1987 – cited in Mangubhai et al., 2005:33) which indicate that even in those cases when teachers do hold adequate understandings of CLT principles, this quite often still proves not enough to inform their classroom practice substantially (Mangubhai et al., 2005:58-59).

Having looked at some of the main drawbacks that are attributed to CLT by some of its critics, in the next section I turn to discussing the practical challenges that this method can potentially encounter when actually applied in classroom teaching.

3.10 POTENTIAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Below follows a summary of some of the general factors that account for the resistance that CLT encounters in the language teaching process, the factors that might be preventing teachers from using CLT.

3.10.1 Lack of teaching skills and knowledge of CLT theory

According to Li, conducting a CLT-based lesson requires certain skills as well as theoretical knowledge of CLT-related theory on the part of the teacher; thus, unless the teacher is well-prepared, applying CLT in actual practice is not an easy task to accomplish (Richards, 2011:5-10). Even though CLT is no longer a novel method in the Western world, there are many non-Western countries where this method has not yet been mastered by the practicing teachers (Richards, 2011:2); consequently, novice teachers, or those for whom the proposed method is unfamiliar, need to acquire at least some basic teaching skills in order to function effectively in a communicative language classroom.

3.10.2 Language proficiency factor

In a communicative language class, more demand is placed on non-native teachers than there was in the case of form-focused language teaching approaches (Lee, 2005:291). Even though it is not indispensable for a teacher to be a native speaker of the target language in order to teach communicatively, there is nevertheless a certain level of communicative proficiency and experience of language use required in order for a teacher to achieve his/her teaching goals (Richards, 2011:3). Thus, in foreign language teaching contexts,

teachers' target language proficiency might become an issue and could prevent CLT from being effectively implemented. Teachers who themselves have never been immersed in the foreign language they are teaching and who lack enough communicative competence in that language are likely to feel overwhelmed and daunted by the spontaneity and unpredictability of the lesson proceedings. Such teachers are likely to have the tendency to "want to hide behind the structure drills, dialogues, and grammar analyses rather than make extreme efforts to create truly communicative environment in the classroom" (Savignon, 1976:15). One of the teachers in the experiment conducted by Li comments: "I am good at English grammar, reading, and writing. But my oral English is very poor. Since I can't speak English well, how can I teach it to my students?" (Li, 1998:686). Also, in his overview of fifteen countries, Ho (2004:26) names teachers' lack of oral proficiency in the foreign language as a factor complicating the introduction of communicative methods.

3.10.3 Classroom management-related problems

Putting CLT in place with large classes is often fraught with many difficulties (Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012:27) and if the teacher is not skillful enough in the teaching process, this might result in a disorganized, chaotic situation, where students do not benefit much from this type of language instruction (Coskun, 2011:85). With large classes, it is also difficult for the teacher to give enough attention to each student individually and guarantee that everybody is on task (Li, 1998:692). Littlewood (2007) has similar observations, arguing that it is always very difficult to control classroom interaction when students are engaged in independent task-based work, resulting in a slightly chaotic atmosphere (Littlewood, 2007:244).

Other concerns related to successful CLT implementation include the difficulty of balancing learners' talking time and encouraging equal classroom participation. It is not uncommon in a CLT lesson that the study process is dominated by just one or two active group members (Littlewood, 2007:245). A Chinese teacher of English interviewed in the study by Li (2003), talked about the classroom management issues: "Many students just sit there idling their time…I am frustrated. Then I have to pull them back to grammar and exercises" (Li, 2003:76).

Classroom arrangement can be another practical issue placing constraints on successful application of CLT. According to Li (1998), sometimes it is really impossible, whether because the furniture is fixed to the floor or for some other reason, to arrange the classroom in such a way that students can interact or move around in a way envisaged by those who recommend CLT. This restricts the possibilities of communicative interaction patterns in the lesson and consequently also the successful implementation of communicative language activities (Li, 1998:692).

3.10.4 Communicative Competence assessment-related difficulties

With regard to CLT assessment, it should be noted that testing learners' communicative abilities is a much more complicated and demanding process, requiring much better preparation, understanding of qualitative assessment systems and skills, together with more time and resources being needed on the part of the teacher, than grammar and vocabulary testing is (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008:18).

Difficulty with communicative language testing might also have a negative 'wash-back' impact on the nature and focus of the teaching process itself, as teachers might be inclined to teach those things which they feel will be easier for them to test at the end of the semester or academic year.

3.10.5 Pre-determined curriculum

Having to follow an officially pre-defined study plan or a coursebook while teaching a foreign language is, firstly, an obligation that restricts teachers' freedom to choose materials suited for their particular group of learners, thus contradicting the principles of CLT (Ngoc & Iwashita, 20012:27); secondly, the realization that teachers have to complete coursebooks by the end of the year and hold an examination based on the knowledge acquired through these materials puts much pressure on teachers. They feel urged to cover the coursebook material rather than focus on useful language and on the communicative value of language learning. This leads to the situation whereby learners' practical language needs and interests are widely ignored and the material and activities are imposed on them by the teacher.

The problem is further intensified if the time allocated for language teaching in schools is insufficient. According to Ngoc and Iwashita, "[d]ue to such large student numbers and the limited time allocated to each lesson, it is challenging for teachers to carry out supplementary communicative activities when there is a strict requirement to cover all the items in the curriculum" (2012:28). As a result, the foreign language is taught as an academic subject, rather than a mean of communication.

3.10.6 Negative effect of the previous exposure to grammar-driven language teaching

Teachers' beliefs and practices largely stem from their own learning experiences, and it takes much time and effort to help them change their ways. As research conducted by Miller and Aldred (2000) revealed, "teachers schooled in teacher-centered classrooms maintained beliefs and attitudes that made it difficult for them to embrace CLT" (cited in Gatbonton & Segalwitz, 2005:327). Similar views were voiced by Tkemaladze et al. (2001), referring to Georgian language teachers' exposure to Soviet language teaching

methodologies as a very negative factor in the process of their transformation into communicative language teachers (2001:36). Teachers as well as learners used to the language form-focused way of language instruction often have difficulty seeing the learning value of CLT activities. In some cases, they might feel that they are not teaching/learning anything if they do not teach/learn new words and grammar in each lesson (Li, 1998:677; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005:327).

3.10.7 CLT material related difficulties

Bax (2003) also criticizes CLT teaching materials for total negligence of the variety of contexts in which it might be used, and claims that the CLT material has a 'one size fits all' character. According to him, the very fact that quite often coursebooks and other teaching resources are advertised under the term "produced for the global market" implies that the material will work anywhere in the world (Bax, 2003:283-285). This sends the wrong message to language teachers: that they should fight "against the context when they should be working with it" (Bax, 2003:286). Rossener (1988) further observes that the ELT field is dominated by teaching resources which are produced by British or American authors. Consequently, they are "unable to avoid projecting through their topics, and their approaches to them, through the language they select, and through the very ethos of the activities they craft, values and educational attitudes which are intrinsically Western and mainly Anglo-Saxon" (1988:160).

However, Rossener also adds that it is not the British or American writers who should be held responsible for making materials suitable for their end-users, but rather local material producers and language educators, who need to look critically at what is available at the international market and to try to come up with their own publications, ones more closely relating and responsive to the needs of local language learners (1988:161). This is not an easy task to achieve, however. Very often, locally-published language teaching materials, in non-native contexts by non-native authors, are not of high quality, providing artificial language and inadequate communication models (*TLG: Annual Report,* 2011). As for adapting the material, even though it is recommended that the teacher modifies and supplements all the materials available according to learners' unique demands, interests and styles (Rossener, 1988:161; Appelebee 1974:119), this is not an easy goal for most teachers to accomplish either. As a result, teachers are left with teaching material which might not be suitable for or even relevant to their own context and thus difficult to exploit for authentic communication.

Coskun (2011) discusses the constraints that teaching material poses upon the implementation of CLT in the language classroom in EFL countries or in poorer communities. It is quite common, he argues, that in such contexts there is little or no access to such teaching resources as authentic materials or teachnologies, CD players, for instance, let alone adequate opportunities to

exploit the Internet. Such circumstances render the CLT implementation process ineffective, as the efficiency of this method, especially in present times, with their modernized technology and communication opportunities, heavily relies on and is strongly defined by the integration of such resources into classroom teaching/learning (2011:92).

3.10.8 Lack of time and expertise to prepare for CLT lessons

Getting ready for a CLT lesson takes much more preparation time for a teacher than grammar-focused teaching methods did. Language teachers who are encouraged to search for authentic, tailor-made teaching materials to cater to the individual needs of their learners need to look for such materials outside their coursebooks. For this purpose, more time as well as knowledge and competence of what, where and how to find the appropriate material, as well as how to exploit it in the lesson, is required on the teachers' part. This might prove overwhelming for teachers with an already heavy workload (Coskun, 2011:85).

A considerable number of teachers involved in the study conducted by Li (1998) confessed that they had neither enough time nor expertise to develop appropriate teaching materials for their classroom use. "I really do not have time for any extra work," complained one of the teachers (1998:689). Comments by practicing teachers reveal how much the practicalities of everyday teaching, which are often overlooked, may be playing a key role in preventing the successful implementation of CLT in different places.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to provide a general theoretical background to Communicative Language Teaching. Information on how this method originated and evolved into its present-day form was provided and the main principles behind CLT were identified. The chapter also discussed in detail what criticism exists of CLT and what challenges are associated with this method.

It turns out that even though CLT has enjoyed great popularity and has triggered much enthusiasm among scholars as well as administrators and teachers, there are also many obvious obstacles on the way to the implementation of CLT in various teaching and learning contexts. Thus, the need "to adapt rather than adopt" (Littlewood, 2007:245) CLT becomes obvious, which, in turn, requires careful analysis of local situations with regard to foreign language teaching and learning before the method is officially recommended, particularly in non-native speaker contexts.

Having explored language teaching history in general terms (Chapter 2), and having looked at CLT separately in more detail (the present Chapter), in Chapter 4 technological innovations which can further boost the opportunities CLT offers are discussed.

CHAPTER 4: TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING[1]

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In teaching as well as other settings, the digital revolution is taking place. Schools need to keep up with major developments in the world, and the language education field has not been left unaffected either. Technology and the opportu-nities it offers for language teaching/learning are very much in line with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the method which is aimed at equipping language learners with the communicative competence and skills necessary for functioning in various situations and communication modes, which these days embraces personal as well as digital interactions.

The abundance of research articles dealing with Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) emphasizes the importance of online communications in language teaching these days, and is another indicator of the fact that another revolution in the field of language teaching might be taking place. However, the situation this time is somewhat different: it is not the major methodological principles or philosophy of how languages are learnt that has been changing, but the interpretation and value attached to the concept of communication itself. Consequently, the goals of CLT as well as the means to achieve these goals have broadened considerably.

Chapter Overview

The importance of technology-enhanced language teaching is described in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 deals with various forms of technology tools that can be exploited in CLT to make it more modernized and relevant to learners' modern-day communicative needs. It provides some introductory comments with regard to what 'blended' teaching/learning means and aims at and how the technology resources can be categorized in the light of language learning /teaching purposes. Issues and difficulties associated with the successful adoption and application of technology-enhanced language teaching are summarized in Section 4.4. Section 4.5 provides recommendations regarding the important points which should not be overlooked while trying to combine more conventional language teaching with technology-led teaching experiences. Section 4.6 concludes Chapter 4 with a summary of important points made throughout the chapter.

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[1] Parts of this chapter are based on an article called "Technology as a Tool Towards Educational Reform: Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia" (Edisherashvili & Smakman 2013).

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING TODAY

Modern technologies have entered all aspects of human life and language teaching is not an exception. As was claimed by an education expert Chapman, computers are transforming communications and the economy, and every child should be exposed to this technology to understand the significance of this transformation (1998:2). Every high school graduate should know how to use a computer and the Internet, have some grasp of how to find information on the Internet, and have general knowledge about how computers are used by businesses, governments, educational institutions, as well as by people in their homes (Chapman, 1998:2). Taylor and Fratto (2012) emphasize the importance of technology use in education and note: "Our education systems must reflect our students' world or we will not only miss the opportunity to capture their attention, but also forgo their full potential to learn and grow" (2012:8). As for the use of technology in the language classroom, it has reportedly been claimed to be beneficial, contributing to making learners more motivated and engaged in the study process, which is also made much more learner-centered (Stepp-Greany, 2002:165).

CLT is claimed to be an approach maximally oriented at satisfying the practical language needs of the learner. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:151). The needs named these days are writing e-mails, navigating the Web, finding information online, chatting online, to name a few. Technology makes it possible to practice the language to meet these requirements. For example, while students in the past would practice their writing by producing a letter addressed to an imaginary person, now an e-mail format is recommended for informal writing purposes; instead of reading a text from a coursebook, there is a possibility to get online and read updated, recent information which would match the learner's needs and current interests. All of these possibilities make the learning/teaching process more authentic and reflect students' real-life needs. Warschauer and Meskill (2000) make another interesting point about the integration of technology and language teaching:

> New communication technologies are part of the broader ecology of life … much of the reading, writing and communication is migrating from other environments (print, telephone, etc) to the screen. In such a context, we can no longer think only about how we use technologies to teach a language. We also must think about what types of language students need to learn in order to communicate effectively via computer (2000:310).

Looking back at the history of language teaching, it can be noticed that each method was accompanied by some form of technology or innovation of that time. For example, the Grammar Translation method, which primarily focused on "one-way transmission of information" (through translations, provision of

grammar rules and linguistic theory), made great use of the blackboard (since the 1840s). Later, the overhead projector (since the 1960s), another excellent tool for teacher-dominated classroom instruction, also came into use, and is still employed in schools for various purposes; audio tapes were quite popular among the practitioners of the Audio Lingual Method (1960s). Currently, technologies need to be used in a more interactive way than previously, however. The time for Interactive White Boards, Multimedia software and many more Computer- and Internet-based resources has come (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:303-304).

Considerable efforts have also been made at the education policy level to support technology-integrated education in Georgia, which together with other efforts made on the Georgian government's part to transform language teaching in the country will be discussed in the following chapter (see Sections 5.4 and 5.5 below).

4.3 VARIOUS FORMS OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) can be described as blended teaching and learning. In TELL Technology-based resources can be exploited and blended with the more conventional practices of Communicative Language Teaching and the face-to-face classroom component can be integrated with some online teaching/learning opportunities. Accordingly, it can be characterized as an efficient teaching mode combining the best of the teacher with the best of the technology to offer the best mix of course delivery modes and an optimal language learning experience (Sharma, 2010:457).

Despite the efficiency and convenience that fusing online and face-to face teaching components offers, there are some challenges associated with combining these two different teaching modes. According to Sharma (2010), application of TELL without a principled approach may be seen as an 'eclectic' blending together of the course components, and can result in a chaotic course structure. Face-to-face and the online components of a course need to be well-coordinated and balanced, with the teacher always assuming the main role and driving force in the lesson (2010:456).

Two categories of technology resources can be classified within CLT according to Warschauer and Meskill (2000:4): the ones that contribute to the enhancement of the cognitive knowledge of a language (e.g. language practice software, multimedia software, etc.), and the ones that can be used for the development of socio-cognitive competence in a language (e.g. the Internet). The first category can be referred to as Computer-Assisted Language Instruction (CALI), whereas the second qualifies more as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), the former implying more of a teacher-centered, and the latter more of a student-centered approach of teaching, exploiting

digital resources for more communicative and social purposes (Davies & Higgins, 1982:3). Both categories can be referred to as Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), as the term encompasses the concepts of both types of technology use in the process of language teaching. Since the focus in the present study is on Communicative Language Teaching, below only CALL tools will be looked at and the advantages and challenges related to using such technologies in the framework of Communicative Language Teaching will be analyzed.

4.3.1 Online communication opportunities and CLT

As already mentioned above, these days online communication has become as important as person-to-person interaction. Thus, employing online communication in language teaching becomes not only a tool for teaching but an end in itself at the same time. Some argue that online communication opportunities, when learners find themselves in an environment where they have to use the foreign language for completing authentic tasks, have a similar effect as study abroad and language immersion programs do (Kabata, 2011:104). However, it should also be born in mind that such activities are most effective when they are well-integrated into the course goals and thoroughly organized to serve the language teaching rather than chatting or information exchange purposes (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:310).

Current technology provides two distinct formats for online interaction: asynchronous and synchronous (Johnson, 2006:46). According to Romiszowski and Mason, "[s]ynchronous interaction occurs in real time and involves students' and teachers' simultaneous participation", whereas asynchronous interaction occurs in delayed time and does not necessitate simultaneous participation (cited in Johnson, 2006:46). I will look at each of the groups in turn and analyze their advantages and disadvantages for foreign language learning/teaching.

One of the best-known online asynchronic communication tools is e-mail, which has been called "the mother of all Internet applications" (Warschauer et al., 2000:307). It is a "system for sending and receiving messages electronically over a computer network. E-mail is asynchronous and does not require the receiver of the message to be online at the time the message is sent or received".[2]

While e-mail is now no "high tech" communication medium any more, it is still highly beneficial for foreign language learning in a communicative way. There are quite a few ways to incorporate e-mail in Communicative Language Teaching. One of them is group e-mail exchanges, where students discuss

[2] The definition of e-mail was retrieved from http://www.thefreedictionary.com/(accessed September, 2012).

certain topics as a group, for pre- or post-lesson activity preparation or follow-up activities. E-mails can also be used for collaborative projects, to establish contacts with e-pals, to give feedback, and many other purposes (Kupelian, 2001:1). According to Jung (1999), e-mail may replace less communicative situations with more genuine and immediate interactions involving real people and real situations: "e-mail-based projects can be motivating and exciting to students because they (students) interact with real people about real things in a meaningful context" (Jung, 1999:221). Research has shown that e-mail use for development of writing skills in a foreign language considerably improves learners' abilities as well as overall attitudes towards language learning and its practice (Perez, 2003:90).

A disadvantage of using e-mail in language teaching is that the language skills practice it offers is limited. E-mail is of little use for developing learners' listening or speaking competence and focuses primarily on writing. As for the drawback that the writing practice involves, critics point out that through writing e-mails only the informal register is practised, and fewer possibilities are provided for more formal writing practice, the argument which seems to be debatable. On top of that, when writing e-mails, students tend to come up with shorter written output than when they have to produce a more traditional paper-based piece of writing (Gonzales-Bueno & Perez, cited in Perez, 2003:90).

Other examples of asynchronous online communication tools are webfora and blogs. A web forum,

> or a message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. They differ from chat rooms in that messages are archived. Also, depending on the access level of a user or the forum set-up, a posted message might need to be approved by a moderator before it becomes visible.[3]

In language teaching, web forums can be used to put learners and the learning object on the same page and encourage users to get involved in natural communication, in the form of a discussion or a debate, for instance (Koohang 2009:91). Online forums provide a great way to improve the quality of students' language learning skills. Learners independently get engaged in meaningful communication and identify their communicative strengths and weaknesses. They write freely, as the inhibitions of face-to-face contact are not present. However, as Kroonenberg (1995:24) remarks, together with the freedom learners have expressing themselves in writing, they are also aware of the fact that their text will be read by many, which keeps them focused on the message of the text as well as the accuracy of it.

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[3] The definition of *web forum* was taken from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_forum (accessed September, 2012).

However, certain pre-conditions have to be met in order to successfully integrate web forums in CLT. Teachers need to be skillful in using the medium, carefully select relevant forums for teaching purposes and be willing to dedicate some time to taking part in the discussions with students on a regular basis. Active involvement of a teacher is very important, which will make the whole process more motivating and exciting for the students (Anderson, 2004:48). Russo and Benson (2005:55) further argue that teacher involvement largely defines the degree of learners' satisfaction in the learning process.

As for weblogs, also known as blogs or online personal journals, these are examples of collaborative technology which provides individuals with an opportunity to express and share their ideas with the public (Bakar, 2009:594). Though most blogs are mainly "textual", there are other types of blogs as well, such as blogs focusing on art (artlog), photographs (photo blog), drawing (sketch blog), videos (vlog), music (MP3 blogs), or audio (podcasting) (Rozgiene et al., 2008:13). Blogs reach out to a wider network of social communities, which might be involved in discussions around a particular topic or issue. In CLT blogs can be exploited by learners to discuss the grammar issues they find difficult to understand, or to exchange/update information on the project they are involved in or the subject they are studying.

The use of blogs in language teaching is gaining popularity as it is perceived to be in line with the language teaching pedagogical models which stress the importance of constructive learning the way CLT does (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002:97-101) and which encourages learners' meaningful learning through active, manipulative, reflective ways (Barak, 2009:585). As argued by Blood, writing in blogs has a self-empowerment effect and develops writers' thoughtfulness and critical writing skills (2002:7). In addition, using blogs encourages English website explorations and communication with "cyber communities" (Bakar, 2009:596).

The possibilitiy for readers to leave comments in an interactive format are an important part of many blogs. This feature may be utilized by both teachers and learners as an attractive and stimulating language learning opportunity. Most of the time, writers post about their thoughts, emotions, and reactions to various things, focusing primarily on the message and paying less attention to the form. This type of communication format is well-reflective of CLT principles of collaborative, meaning-focused teaching/learning (Oravec, 2002:616). Blogging also encourages a more student-centered atmosphere as well as students' autonomy in the process of language learning (Bakar, 2009:595). In the same way as web forums do (see above), blogs also help with developing learners' critical thinking and writing skills in a foreign language – as students know that their ideas will be displayed for public observation, they are more critical towards what and how they write (Brown, 2004:260), contributing

to the development of meaningful and at the same time accurate communication skills.

There are limitations to applying blogging in CLT, however, such as a difficulty in using this tool with students with lower language proficiency. Also, blogs by themselves cannot help learners learn a language unless it comes with a well-planned and organized language activity (Barak, 2009:603). Creative guidance, and proper feedback on the part of the instructor is also a must after a blogging session (Fageeh, 2011:42).

And in the end, there is some evidence that suggests that exploitation of asynchronous online communication tools in language teaching can be enjoyable as well as beneficial for language learners. There is some evidence that students involved in asynchronous online communication experience a higher level of course satisfaction and score higher (Koory, 2003:1; Johnson, 2006:69-70). Below follows a summary of some of the main strengths and weaknesses of asynchronous online tools for CLT classroom use.

Advantages:

- Use of these tools reduces anxiety, and relieves the stress associated with face-to-face communication (Hoffman, 1996:24).
- It allows archiving, which gives teachers, as well as students, a chance to more carefully review the written output and introduce corrections (Branon & Essex, 2001:36).
- It helps develop "higher order thinking skills" as it allows learners more time to organize thoughts and write them down before posting (Sharma & Barrett, 2007:105).

Disadvantages:

- Lack of immediate feedback.
- Students not checking the discussion often enough.
- The time it takes for discussions to mature.
- Less social interaction than in face-to-face or in synchronous chatting (Dede & Kramer, 1999:4).

As for synchronous online communication tools, Park and Bonk (2007) comment that "synchronous communication has a great potential to increase individual participation and performance", and allows for instant feedback and authentic communication (Park & Bonk, 2007:245). Below, some tools of synchronous communication that can be used in CLT will be discussed. One of these is instant messaging, while others are the use of Skype and Facebook.

Instant messaging (IM) is a form of online communication that allows real-time (or close to real-time) interaction through personal computers or mobile computing devices. Users can exchange messages privately, similar to e-mail, or join group conversations (Skype messenger, Google messenger, msn messenger). Instant messaging allows to meet in a networked computer lab and

communicate via writing rather than talk face-to-face. The entire session can be saved and passed on to students for further observation and error correction. Even though this form of communication might seem a little artificial in the CLT language classroom, it has its advantages. First, it offers less outspoken pupils a better chance to be an equal part of the discussion; second, it enables students to better notice and understand the input of the classmates; third, it allows learners more time to reflect on the language used and come up with more complex and interesting language structures. A possibility to save the written record of the conversation provides learners with a chance to go back and see what they came up with while communicating spontaneously.

Skype is another efficient synchronous communication tool, which offers a free and easy way to access the world; it goes beyond learners' classrooms and provides opportunities of learning through communicating with other people. Skype also allows for audio and video calls, instant messaging, and chat file and screen sharing, which help language learners to develop their language skills in the most authentic and interactive way possible. Through Skype things such as arranging an interview with a native speaker from another country, organizing international collaborative projects with other classrooms worldwide, sharing presentations among peers from other parts of the world, making virtual world trips, having guest speakers in the lesson – is all free of charge and just "a mouse click away" (Eaton, 2010:1).

Using Skype in language teaching is not free from accompanying challenges: technical problems, which are quite common in the process of technology exploitation, might result in a waste of time and frustration. Teachers have to be extremely organized and well-prepared for setting up a Skype session. As Skype provides a real-time experience, fixing a mutually convenient time for all parties involved in the Skype communication might take some effort. And finally, the proper infrastructure, technical support at schools as well as special skills on the teachers' part are absolutely necessary to make the whole experience possible (Vila, 2010:1). Below follows a summary of some of the main strengths and weaknesses of synchronous online communication tools that can be used in CLT classrooms, as compared with face-to-face or asynchronous modes of online communication.

Advantages:

- Synchronous online communication helps learners develop fluency though unplanned, spontaneous communication.
- It bears more social characteristics than asynchronous online communication.
- It encourages more learner participation than asynchronous communication.
- It offers immediate response and feedback possibilities.

- It allows for the use of visual and audio aids in the process of communication (video/web conferencing) – body language, tone of voice (Hines & Pearl, 2004:34).

Disadvantages:

- Real-time online meetings are difficult to coordinate – to get all the participants online at the same time.
- It is difficult to moderate longer discussions.
- It requires special technical skills on the teachers' part.
- It is disadvantageous for poor typists.
- It lacks documentation, as the text is not archived (Branon & Essex, 2001:36).

The Internet provides many social networking websites, which function as an online community of the Internet users. Facebook (FB) is one, if not the most popular of them, these days. The popularity of Facebook as a language teaching/learning tool has been determined by the fact that it has become an omnipresent online medium, which millions of people all over the world use to communicate and keep in touch. It is also a source of much interesting and authentic information about different topics (Kabilan, et al., 2010:3). Although Facebook offers the functions that can be found in other programs as well, its comprehensive character, as well as the ease with which its users can employ all of its features, defines the distinctive nature and popularity of this social networking tool (Kabilan et al., 2010:2).

According to Godwin-Jones (2008) the tools and platforms such as FB, which "enhance communication and human interaction can potentially be harnessed for language learning" (2008:7). According to Kabilan et al., (2010) "learning of English in FB is feasible. This is because the technologies that support FB and features that characterize FB are able to engage students in meaningful language-based activities" (2010:7). Agreeing with the above views, and further emphasizing the benefit that FB can bring to the CLT classroom, below, some of the CLT language learning theories and principles that can be largely realized through and supported by FB are provided: "incidental learning", "socially-situated learning", "knowledge construction", as well as "[language] observation" "repetition", "problem-solving", "learning from mistakes", "learning by doing", and "critical analysis" (Kabilan et al., 2010:2-3). Possibilities of sharing pictures, videos, web links, as well as chatting, creating groups, events, providing feedback, for instance, can all be efficiently exploited for language teaching purposes and make the learning process a part of a whole, natural communication process that most of us are involved in on a daily basis (Blattner, & Fiori, 2009:19–20; Mathews, 2010:1). Thus, Facebook can be described as a tool which helps with "developing language learners' socio-pragmatic awareness and competence through meaningful intervention,

and for promoting their cross-cultural understanding" (Blattner, & Fiori, 2009:22).

Recent investigations have shown that Facebook can have a positive effect on the student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationship as well (Mazer et al., 2007:1). Mazer and his colleagues noted that by accessing a social networking website, students may see similarities with peers and instructors' personal interests, which contributes to enhanced communication and better learning results. O'Sullivan and his colleagues (2004) discovered that students who have access to teacher websites containing self-disclosed information reported high levels of motivation and demonstrated a boost in learning. Moreover, students developed more positive feelings towards the teacher as well as the learning process itself (2004:464). Below follows a summary of some of the views regarding the main strengths and weaknesses of Facebook use in CLT classroom.

Advantages:

- It boosts learners' motivation and engagement in the language learning (Kabilan et al., 2010:7).
- It enhances learners' communication skills (Kabilan et al., 2010:7).
- It promotes collaborative work and learning from one another (Blattner & Fiori, 2009:19–20).
- It facilitates the development of socio-pragmatic and intercultural awareness in second language learners (Blattner & Fiori, 2009:22).
- It facilitates contact with native speakers (Blattner & Fiori, 2009:22).
- It contributes to "incidental" language learning, especially vocabulary acquisition, and the development of informal writing (Kabilan et al., 2010:7).

Disadvantages:

- Difficulty with the time management while working on FB (Fodeman & Monroe, 2009:36).
- Difficult for learners to stay focused on the learning goals only.
- Develops mainly non-academic language knowledge (Kabilan et al., 2010:7).
- Unless FB is integrated in classroom teaching in a skillful manner, and unless proper pedagogic value is attributed to its use, the learning process might become disorganized (Yunus et al., 2012:45).
- Thus, the potential of Facebook to be exploited for the purposes of learning and teaching English as well as other languages should not be underestimated these days. This is especially true for CLT classrooms, where authentic communication, synchronous or asynchronous, is the primary target of language teaching/learning. The challenges related to

> its use, however, should also be duly acknowledged and dealt with (Kabilan, et al., 2010:2).

To conclude the discussion about the asynchronous and synchronous online communication tools and the opportunities that their use in CLT classrooms offers, it should be mentioned that this area is still under-investigated. Consequently, it is difficult to make strong claims about whether it is online or face-to-face communication opportunities that result in better outcomes in communicative language classes. It is also debatable whether these are synchronous or asynchro-nous online communication tools that are conducive to better communicative proficiency results on the language learners' part. According to Johnson, "[b]oth synchronous and asynchronous forms of online discussion have advantages and there is evidence that both contribute to students' cognitive and affective outcomes, albeit in distinct fashion" (2006:51). However, further research and reflection is still necessary in order to arrive at more decisions with regard to how to integrate technology in communicative language teaching in a consistent and efficient manner.

4.3.2 Other web-based resources and CLT

The Internet offers a number of very useful language learning websites which offer many multidimensional language practice opportunities, aimed at learners' language knowledge as well as at the improvement of language skills. Variety, its up-to-date nature, the possibility of offering immediate correction and feedback opportunities and learner independence are some of the highlights that characterize online language practice exercises and which make such tools more attractive to language learners than their traditional paper alternatives (Sharma & Barrett, 2007:42).

Another interesting web-based resource that can be exploited in CLT is what is called Virtual Worlds. Virtual World learning platforms are the latest technology that is gaining popularity in education and language training. Perhaps the best-known example of Virtual World is Second Life. In Virtual World, users can take on the form of imaginary characters, sometimes special virtual creatures, and live their lives in simulated environments (Berns et al., 2012:215). Virtual World is an efficient tool for flexible, collaborative and experiential learning. Learners are plunged into a virtual world, within a community of native speakers. The participants become cyber community members and feel physically present in a shared local space. Participants are also given a chance to practice completing real-life tasks – participate in meetings and hold brief talks in a foreign language (Palomaki & Nordback, 2012:1). Below follows a summary of some of the views regarding the main strengths and weaknesses associated with online practice programs and VW tools used for language teaching purposes.

Advantages:

- The use of Virtual World tools allows for a maximum engagement and immersion into authentic environments.
- The sense of a physical presence helps develop stronger conceptual understanding of the content.
- Virtual Worlds are interactive, motivating and activating.
- They develop students' independence.
- They help to lower learners' anxiety – learners are more open and free in communication.

Disadvantages:

- VWs are a comparatively new and underexplored technology tool in language teaching.
- Dealing with technical breakdowns is an issue.
- The use of Virtual Worlds requires extensive pedagogic support to enable teachers to employ this tool to its full potential.
- Using Virtual Worlds might be a daunting experience for some (Rozgiene et al., 2008:11).

Wikis, another internet-based resource, present interesting opportunities for use in CLT as well. They allow "visitors to add, remove, and edit content collaboratively" (Rozgiene et al., 2008:13). According to Wagner (2004), "Wikis (from wikiwiki, meaning 'fast' in Hawaiian) are a promising new technology that supports "conversational knowledge creation and sharing" (2004:265). A good example of a large wiki is Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia in many languages that anyone can edit. Wikis provide many opportunities for students to develop their language knowledge, skills and experiences in a very motivating and engaging way (Papadima-Sophocleous, 2012:179). While using Wikis, learners are actively involved in collaborative work, where they are engaged in reviewing and displaying information for real public observation in real time. This experience can have highly motivating effects on learners and form a valuable assessment basis for the teacher/tutor (Wagner, 2004:265). Wikis are largely socially oriented, are open source and can be exploited for a wide variety of purposes and they can be used for things like knowledge management and collaboration.

To sum up, the use of Wikis in language teaching supports collaborative learning, the students' active role in learning, learners' independence, group/pair work, authenticity of interaction and materials used; all of these language teaching aspects are strongly advocated by CLT and completely compatible with its main principles. Below follows a summary of some of the views (Wagner, 2004:265–289) regarding the main strengths and weaknesses associated with the use of Wikis for language teaching purposes.

Advantages:

- The use of Wikis is a quick and simple way for collaborative work and for promoting group unity.
- It offers opportunities for authentic language work.
- It promotes independence and content ownership.
- It encourages peer-correction.
- It increases motivation.

Disadvantages:

- It requires well-designed instruction and careful selection of the tasks on the part of the teacher.
- It requires careful distribution of roles and tasks by the teacher.
- Most Wikis focus on writing; consequently, students need to already have a minimum level in the L2 and be able to produce some words, phrases, or sentences (less suitable for lower levels) (Rozgiene, 2008:40).

A podcast is defined as "a digital media file, or a series of such files, that is distributed over the Internet for playback on portable media players and personal computers".[4] To put it differently, it is a group of files (in general, audio or video files, but also images, text, PDF, or any other file type) placed at a certain web address. People can subscribe to certain podcasts and when the new material about the subject becomes available, users are automatically updated about this and the material is downloaded to their computer.[5] In Wikipedia, we read: "Podcasting is becoming increasingly popular in education. It can be a tool for teachers or administrators to communicate curriculum, assignments and other information with parents and the community. Podcasting can be a publishing tool for student oral presentations. Video podcasts can be used in all these ways as well".[6] Language learning has been identified as one of the disciplines likely to benefit from developments in podcasting (Kukulska-Hulme, 2006:119). It provides access to authentic materials and provides opportunities for learning much about the country where the target language is spoken (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007:476). Language teachers can direct their learners to podcasts available on the Internet for self-study purposes or make learners listen to them in class via a computer.

Podcasting can be used as a platform for sharing information with anyone at any time – between administrators, teachers, learners and their parents about various aspects of teaching and learning. An absent student can download a podcast of a missed lesson that was recorded; teachers can record students' oral presentations, foreign language lessons, interviews and debates

[4] For retrieved from http://www.baysidejobs.com.au/480/-676536/user-community (accessed September 2012).
[5] Retrieved from http: //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting (accessed September 2012).
[6] Retrieved from http: //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting (accessed September 2012).

(Rozgiene et al., 2008:13), as well as audio recordings of texts, pronunciation samples, oral feedback, audio exercises, songs, and "audio flashcards" where the key vocabulary items are read out loud (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007:480). Below follows a summary of the main strengths and weaknesses associated with use of Podcasting for language teaching purposes.

Advantages:

- Using podcasts is motivating and engaging.
- It promotes language use for authentic communication purposes.
- It supports developing the learning skills – "lifelong learning" (Naismith et al., 2005:4).
- It is a great source of authentic language learning materials (Wiley, 2000:7).
- It offers "mobile learning" (Kukulska-Hulme, 2005:2).

Disadvantages:

- Using podcasts increases teacher "workload" and preparation time.
- It entails depreciation of the value of classroom presence and interaction.
- Using podcasts can be "time-consuming": "Podcasts cannot be skimmed" and the teacher/learner has to listen to the whole recording to check its suitability or appropriateness for the purpose, or when in need to listen to certain parts of it only (Sloan, 2005; Menzies, 2005; Blaisdell, 2005 cited in Rosell-Aguilar 2007:480).

Another online tool – YouTube –, which is defined in Wikipedia as: "a video-sharing website on which users can upload, view and share videos. A wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content, such as, video blogging and short original videos can be found on YouTube".[7]

It is one of the most popular web-based tools among the students belonging to the generation of so-called "digital natives" – a person who has grown up with digital technology (Prensky, 2001:1). Thus, the use of YouTube, with all its functions – creating, watching, and sharing the videos – in foreign language teaching will most likely result in much enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards the language learning experience among learners (Terantino, 2011:10).

YouTube provides an opportunity to watch videos about virtually any topic. It offers great opportunity to teachers to choose the material as relevant to the course topic and students' interests as possible. Watching videos on YouTube can provide learners not only with authentic language samples, but

[7] Definition retrieved from: http: //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube (accessed September 2012).

also with content on the culture of the target language, which is important for developing their understanding of the socio-cultural aspect of the foreign language. YouTube can also be a perfect tool for helping learners practice their listening skills by watching an interesting video, which might as well lead to an interesting follow-up discussions (Terantino, 2011:12).

Other possibilities that YouTube offers language learners include an opportunity for students to record and upload videos themselves, as the documentation of their project work, for example. YouTube videos also allow students to collaborate on language-based projects, which they can also share on the web, and get real feedback to their final product from a real public. The whole experience can serve as motivation for students in the process of language learning (Terantino, 2011:13).

There are also some deeper, more scientific advantages associated with the use of YouTube in language teaching. As cited in Terantino (2011):

> Berk (2009) describes a review of theoretical and research-based studies related to the use of videos and the brain. He discusses how the use of videos has been found to benefit students by connecting to their multiple intelligences, both hemispheres of the brain, and to the emotional sense of the students.

Also, according to 'picture superiority effect' (Cattell, 1886), things are much more memorable when seen as an image rather than in a written form (cited in Terantino, 2011:11). Below follows a summary of some of the views regarding the main strengths and weaknesses associated with the use of YouTube for language learning/teaching purposes.

Advantages:

- YouTube helps with better remembering the presented material
- It provides both linguistic as well as cultural content for language learning, which can be used for a variety of purposes in the study process (presentation, illustration, stimulation, motivation).
- It is particularly useful for providing authentic materials for "less commonly taught languages".
- It encourages student "participation", "collaboration", "creativity", and "freedom of expression" (Terantino, 2011:10-14).
- YouTube can also be used as an offline tool – videos can be easily downloaded and used later even on a computer without the Internet connection.

Disadvantages:

- It is necessary that appropriateness of the videos created as well as watched by learners is carefully monitored.

- Preparing YouTube material for classroom teaching can be time-consuming – the teacher has to choose the right video relevant for classroom use from millions of available videos on YouTube, as well as make a plan for its proper integration into the study process.
- Accessing videos online might be related to some unexpected technical problems, and lack of reliability. Thus, the teacher needs to be prepared for dealing with the problem as needed.
- A good Internet connection is also necessary to provide easy access to the videos available online (Terantino, 2011:14).
- Advertisements can be time-consuming and annoying.

As with any other types of technology used in language teaching, in the case of YouTube as well, it is important that the teacher maintains the right balance and adopts 'pedagogic' approach while exploiting its potential for classroom teaching purposes (Terantino, 2011:15).

To conclude the discussion about the web-based resources used for communication (Section 4.3.1) as well as other purposes (Section 4.2.2), it should be reiterated that the myriad of opportunities that the World Wide Web offers for communicative language learning, is an invaluable asset in the communicative language classes: fluency oriented work, focus on meaningful communication, skills development, authentic material provided all in the target language; flexibility, independence and active involvement of language learners in the learning process and their own knowledge construction; student-focused, student-oriented mode of teaching – most of CLT principles can be easily realized through online tools. Rozgien et al. (2008) sum up the opportunities the World Wide Web offers in the following way: "the Web is both a source of authentic materials covering different topics, respiratory of specific Language Teaching sites, a tool for communication and a medium for collaboration" (2008:35). The World Wide Web brings students out of their classrooms into a cross-cultural environment and gives them an opportunity to be immersed in the authentic discourse of the world. This is especially essential for students who are learning the target foreign language in non-native environment with the help of non-native teachers (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:9).

4.3.3 Other digital tools and CLT – interactive white board (IWB)

According to Gage (2005) "an IWB is essentially a large computer screen, which is sensitive to touch" (2005:1). A slightly more elaborate definition of the IWB is that of a combination of a computer, an electronic projector and a whiteboard, which allows a number of useful manipulations for the language classroom (Leithner, 2009:35; Gage, 2005:3). Gages (2005), when discussing the benefits of the use of this digital tool for teaching purposes, remarks that "an interactive whiteboard facilitates interactivity". It is exactly the latter merit that is attached to the IWB that makes its exploitation different from simply using a

"large computer image" and turns this tool into an efficient means for supporting Communicative Language Teaching (2005:133).

There are two types of interactive whiteboards: the first is a 'virtual' electronic version of a regular board on a computer that enables learners in a virtual classroom to view what an instructor, presenter or fellow learner writes or draws. This type of IWB is also referred to as an electronic whiteboard

The second type is a more multifunctional one. As Williams and Easingwood (2004) put it:

> Multifunctional Interactive White Board technology allows you to write or draw on the surface, print off the image, save it to the computer or distribute it over a network. You can also project a computer screen image onto the surface of the whiteboard and then either control the application by touching the board directly or by using a special pen. The computer image can be annotated or drawn over and the annotations saved to disc or sent by email to others (2004:46).

Figure 5.1 provides an image of the use of an IWB use in a language classroom.

4.1 Image of an interactive white board and its classroom use[8]

There is also some research evidence that the IWB can be used for stimulating discussion, problem-solving skills as well as whole class involvement in the study process (Gage, 2005:8). For creative teachers, there are some programs available for IWB that allow the creation of material, presentation as well as practice. These days more and more coursebooks are created which have an IWB version as well. Such programs allow adaptation and customization of the teaching material for individual classroom use. Accoriding to Sharma and Barrette (2011), "[s]tandard functions of IWB include possibilities to zoom in on certain parts of the page, to have audio files and transcripts readily available,

[8] Image retrieved from http://etec.ctlt.ubc.ca/510wiki/images/5/58/StudentsUsingtheSMARTboard.jpg (accessed September 2012).

to quickly check the answers of an exercise (Sharma & Barrette, 2011:2)[9]. Below follows a summary of some of the advantages and issues, based on Sharma and Barrette's (2011) arguments, related to the IWB use in a language classroom.

Advantages

- Offers possibilities of alternative modes of language presentation integrating a wide range of material into a lesson such as an image or a text from the Internet, or a graph from a spreadsheet, becomes feasible.
- Allows creation of customized learning material to meet the needs of the class.
- Frees learners from note-taking – the classroom becomes a "heads up" environment rather than having students stare into their text books.
- Facilitates resource sharing.
- Useful for providing feedback – when used for interactive testing of understanding for the entire class, the IWB can help provide a whole class feedback in a quick and efficient manner.
- Time-saving – the teacher who prepares and saves a lesson in an interactive whiteboard can reuse the lesson with the other group

Disadvantages:

- Interactive whiteboards are much more expensive to obtain and maintain than traditional whiteboards.
- Some technical skills are needed exploit and deal with certain technical problems which might arise while using IWB. (Sharma & Barrett, 2011:2-5)

In the end, it should be noted that the IWB will not have much value for classroom teaching unless efficiently exploited and integrated in the lesson by the teacher, and if she/he fails to do so, "a powerful piece of technology will be simply used as a large display screen" (Toyn, 2007:133). As Toyn (2007) further elaborates, "[it] is the teachers who creates the opportunities for learning and uses the IWB to maximize the potential of those opportunities: it is not the board which determines how much interaction occurs, but the teacher using it" (2007:133). Thus, it is still the teacher's right decisions and efficiency which, in this as well as in other case of teachnology use, remain the key factors in determining the ultimate success of technology-enhanced language learning.

In the previous two sections the main digital tools that can be exploited in CLT have been discussed, and the advantages and challenges related to the use of each of these tools have been looked at. In the following

[9] For more information about the functions of the IWB, see http:// onlinehelp. mindjet. com/Help/Mind Manager/8/ ENU /im_ whiteboard_function.htm (accessed 2012 October).

section, advantages and disadvantages of technology-enhanced communicative language teaching will be explored in a more general manner.

4.4 SUMMARY OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

As discussed in the preceding sections, the most common resources available today, offline and online, which might be used in a Communicative Language Teaching class are: language practice software, multimedia simulation software, language games, Word, PowerPoint, teaching/learning sites, virtual worlds, e-mail, Web fora, blogs, Instant Messaging, Skype, Facebook, Wikipedia, podcasts, YouÍube, and Interactive White Boards. Despite all the obvious advantages and practical benefits that it offers, technology-enhanced communicative language teaching still encounters resistance and many challenges in many parts of the world. Whereas there are opportunities to modernize language education by employing up-to-date technology resources, there are also pros and cons related to the application of technology in language teaching, which need to be carefully considered in order to achieve optimal results.

4.4.1 Advantages of using technology in CLT

Below follows a summary, in the form of a list, of the benefits the tecchnoligy tools can offer for communicative language teaching.

Advantage #1. Learners are more engaged in the study process.

Integration of technology in the process of language teaching helps to transform classrooms from teacher-centered into student-centered learning environments (Pitler, 2006:41). The teacher no longer assumes the role of the sole knowledge-provider. Knowledge is constructed through real task completion, which is very much in line with CLT principles.

One of the teachers involved in the technology-related study of Ertmer et al. (2012) summarized his attitude towards truly communicative language teaching in the following way: "If you walk into my room and you are not sure if I am even there, but the kids are engaged, then I feel like I am being successful because it really has to be student-centered" (2012:431). Technology is a useful tool that might help create such a learner-centered environment in the process of teaching.

Advantage #2. The teaching is more communicative and interactive

Rozgien (2008) says that the Internet has become a great tool for communication in teaching, and a medium for collaboration. The Internet is especially useful for language teaching, as communication takes place through a language, which, within a technology-enhanced language teaching format, is a means to achieve communicative tasks and, at the same time, a study object itself. Social networking, blogging and chatting are some of the Internet-based tools which greatly contribute to a highly communicative and interactive mode of language instruction (2008:35).

Advantage # 3. More learner autonomy

With the aid of technology, students can make more choices and take on a more active role in their own learning (Pilter, 2006:41). They can propose, create, and test independent learning experiences in a foreign language; for example, create their own blogs, post their comments, and make videos. In all these tasks, language use plays an instrumental role; learners are immersed in purposeful communication, which contributes greatly to the improvement of their overall language proficiency (Ertmer et al., 2012:430).

Advantage #4. An inexhaustible source of authentic materials

When a language is taught in a country where this language is a non-native tongue of the local population (e.g. when English is taught in a non-English-speaking country, such as Georgia), the availability of adequate and appropriate teaching materials is often a problem.

Even though some think that retrieving online teaching materials through the Internet and tailoring them to the existing needs of language learners can be a time-consuming experience (Hémard & Cushion, 2002), it is hard to find a coursebook which would cater to most of learners' individual needs and interests. Under these circumstances, exploiting web-based resources can be an invaluable solution to the problem. Also, the authenticity of the Internet-based resources makes them more attractive and motivating for learners and can better prepare them for real-life communication (Sharma & Barrette, 2007:42).

Advantage #5. Motivating and encouraging

Students are more interested in the type of learning which involves activities that reflect their daily life experiences. This way learners see the benefits of their

learning practices and the direct application of the knowledge they are trying to gain, which is motivating and encouraging. Motivation is paramount to student success and one of the contributing factors to a more efficient learning process (Granito & Chernobilsk, 2012:3). Krashen, in line with this, observed that learners with a high motivation do better in second language acquisition (1982:31). Thus, the motivational role of technology use in Communicative Language Teaching has to be duly recognized.

Advantage #6. Relaxing learning atmosphere

In learning/teaching process, it learning/teaching process is always important to create a low-anxiety environment in which a productive learning process can take place. In language education this may be especially important since, in order to take in and produce the language, learners the need to feel that they are allowed to make mistakes and take risks. This relates directly to Krashen's Active Filter Hypothesis (1982). According to Krashen, learners must be non-anxious in the process of learning so as to enable them to acquire the language (1982:30). Technology is non-judgmental and does not involve direct personal evaluation, and this contributes to lowering the affective filter factor, resulting in more productive language learning. Shy learners who might feel intimidated in face-to-face communication are offered a wider range of interactional modes, where they might feel less stressed and freer to interact (Pilter, 2006:41).

Advantage #7. Integrated-skills development

Such activities as online projects and research contribute greatly to natural language skills development, as in order to complete authentic tasks collaboratively students speak, listen, write and read at the same time. A process of multiple skills acquisition thus takes place, which is also accompanied by a recycling of vocabulary and grammar, which is equally significant (Dooly & Masats, 2011:49).

More importantly, while working on such authentic collaborative tasks, learners use their language skills for learning purposes, which prepare them for life-long learning. This outcome goes far beyond the classroom boundaries and becomes an important life experience for language learners (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:309).

Technology-enhanced learning also provides a multisensory and multi-format environment (Pilter, 2006:41) which greatly supports learners with different learning styles, preferences and abilities. According to Gardner (1983), in order to achieve optimal teaching results, the learners' individual "intelligences" must never be overlooked. For instance, some learners

remember things better when these things are presented in graphic form, some prefer hearing things, while for others seeing things (e.g., words or pictures) move is more useful. The computer can satisfy the needs of many types of learners, making material available to the learner in the form of a text, a video clip or a movie format (Berk, 2009:11).

Advantage #8. Technical benefits

Alongside the online tools, there are online computer-based resources, such as language practice software, language games, Microsoft Office programs (text processors, slide presentation tools, for instance), which, compared with the traditional procedures, contribute to the efficiency of Communicative Language Teaching by providing learners and teachers with more easy-to-use writing, editing, information saving, and material recycling tools, as well as correction and feedback provision possibilities (Valentin et al., 2013:56). The opportunities that such online technology offers help boost learners' and teachers' motivation and efficiency, and save time in their learning/teaching process (AbuSeileek, 2006:12; Garris et al., 2002:441).

4.4.2 Challenges of using technology in CLT

Besides offering useful ways of improving the classes, the same tools can pose serious challenges to both teachers and the schools. The challenges most frequently discussed in the literature are listed below.

Challenge #1. Expense of implementation

There are many start-up expenses, such as buying hardware and software, hiring and training technical personnel. As financial investment is indispensible in making a technology-enhanced teaching environment possible, this means that schools need to consider the cost-effectiveness of the efforts (Ringst & Kelley, 2002:23).

Challenge #2. Finding an appropriate methodology

As the computer is only a tool and a resource, not a method that can be used in the process of teaching (Garret, 1991:74), it is difficult to define beforehand whether it can be exploited to its fullest advantage and thus lead to satisfying results. Elaboration of an appropriate pedagogical approach and method is essential for making technology work and turning it into a useful teaching tool. According to Pilter (2006), "[i]f schools add technology without providing adequate professional development the only thing that will increase is their

electric bill" (2006:39). This idea is shared by Salehi (2012), according to whom the effectiveness of technology use in teaching largely depends on "how and why it is applied" (2012:215). Bringing new machines into the classroom simply to seem innovative does not help teaching or learning; on the contrary, in case of misuse, the technology application in the teaching process might have a reverse effect, namely demotivating students, who might perceive their interpersonal connections and personal power reduced (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:14).

Also, it has been proved that short-term, one-time superficial teacher training programmes aimed at helping teachers integrate technology in teaching often turn out to have equally short-term effects. More systematic supervision and support need to be provided to teachers in order to have a more profound and long-lasting impact on their methodological capacities (Ringstaff & Kelly, 2000:12).

Challenge #3. Keeping up with technology development

Looking at the history of language teaching, it may be seen that each method was accompanied by some form of technology or innovation. For example, the Grammar Translation method, which primarily focused on a one-way transmission of information, made great use of the blackboard (since the 1840s). The blackboard was partly replaced by the overhead projector (since the 1960s), another tool for teacher-dominated classroom instruction. Computer software programs and audio tapes were popular among the practitioners of the Audio Lingual Method, in the 1960s. These tools were mostly offline, and development in this area continued in the subsequent decades and then peaked in the 1990s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:63).

It is a challenge for teachers to keep up with fast technological developments. Being able use technological tools effectively entails a good understanding and knowledge of what is available for classroom use. Staying up-to-date with modern trends in technology and constantly trying to think of ways to make those parts of the language teaching can be a time-consuming process, which requires constant dedication and enthusiasm from teachers (Sharma & Barrett 2003:3;).

Challenge #4. Technophobia

For some teachers, dealing with technology and effectively integrating it into the teaching methodology and curriculum can be a challenging and daunting experience (Sharma & Barrett, 2003:2). Technophobia is still present among some teachers and learners (Leither, 2009:35). This is a big obstacle, usually more for teachers than learners, and unless this fear is overcome the goal of making technology-enhanced teaching a common practice will be hard to achieve (Rozgiene et al., 2008:32).

Challenge #5. A lack of computer skills

Integrating technology in language teaching demands specific skills from teachers. A lack of necessary technical skills and confidence can be a factor preventing teachers from using technology in their teaching (Salehi, 2012:215). Before teachers try to come up with the proper methodology to efficiently combine technology and face-to-face teaching, it is important that they as well as their learners have some basic skills to build their language learning/teaching experiences upon (Rozgien et al., 2008:32-33).

Challenge #6. Limited suitability of tools

Using technology not only as the content of language learning but also as learning material and as a tool is especially efficient for more advanced language learners. The Internet, for example, offers authentic materials which can be exploited in language teaching. Naturally, the whole process of working on original texts, with instant communications and digital correspondence, might become a barrier for beginner language learners, who need more explicit, slower, face-to-face contact to understand things better and to build up a linguistic basis.

Challenge #7. Psychological resistance

Learners' as well as teachers' conservative perceptions about efficient teaching methods and about how languages are learnt might lead to skepticism towards using technologies as an academic teaching tool (Warshauer, 2000:24). These concerns were confirmed by the teachers participating in a study conducted by Ertmer et al. (2012:423). Teachers noted that the strongest barriers preventing them from using technology were, amongst otherthings, their existing attitudes and beliefs towards technology. Such resistance comes especially from the students and teachers who belong to instructional cultures where more conservative, teacher-centered methods of language instruction are applied. According to Ertmer et al., to remedy the situation professional development efforts need to be redirected towards strategies for facilitating changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs (2012:423).

Challenge #8. Administrative repercussions

E-mailing online communication, and planning and tracking learners' progress can be very time-consuming (Salehi, 2012:215), and the fact that most administrators still count the actual time the teacher spends in the classroom

to determine the workload might be a discouraging factor for educators and make them avoid using technology-enhanced teaching tools (Rozgiene, et al., 2008:30).

In closing off the discussion about the advantages and challenges related to technology integration in language teaching, I will refer to Warschauer and Meskill (2000), who claim that despite the difficulties associated with the technology use in language education, technoology-enhanced language teaching should still be the goal of all language educators all over the world (2000:305). To further elaborate, technology use in language teaching is especially useful for those language teachers who practice CLT, as the learning opportunities digital tools offer matches perfectly with the principles of almost all aspects of Communicative Language Teaching (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991:7). Technology use in language teaching helps to make the learning process meaningful and more fluency- and skills-oriented; helps with the target language use and inductive teaching approach (Kramsch & Andersen, 1999:31; Stepp-Greany, 2002:166); makes course structure more flexible, and encourages a skills-oriented assessment approach; encourages learner-centered interaction, with much pair/group work; helps transform the teachers' role of a knowledge provider into a facilitator and a guide (Prensky, 1998:3); contributes to learners' independence and involvement in the study process; makes available authentic, up-to-date teaching resources, which match students needs and interests (Cowan et al., 2003:459).

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the advantages and challenges described so far, the following recommendations can be deduced. They are useful in particular for countries like Georgia, which are facing a plethora of educational choices already besides having to prepare for challenges which arise from the digital revolution.

Recommendation #1: Avoid excessive enthusiasm

Generally, even though the importance of having more innovative, technology-based practices introduced into the language teaching system is widely recognized, the excessive enthusiasm for computers gives some people grounds to worry about making pupils over-dependent on technologies. As Chapman puts it, "The growing mania for getting a computer for every child in schools is dangerous and foolish" (Chapman, 1998:2). This situation, according to Waschauer and Meskil, is reminiscent of the times when some decades ago the promises of "magic through technology" did not quite materialise, bringing about much frustration and skepticism towards technology-based approaches, such as audio labs. Consequently, excessive enthusiasm should be restrained and overdependence on the computer should be avoided (Werschauer & Meskil, 2000:2).

Recommendation #2: Make technology targeted and meaningful

Using innovative, modern tools of technology in teaching seems appealing and attractive. However using, new technologies has to always be serving a concrete academic purpose and this use must never be merely for the sake of introducing something different and innovative in the teaching routine. Technology use should not become an end in itself (Chapman, 1998:2).

"We must ensure that the teaching is driven by the pedagogy and supported by the technology", Laborda (2008:289) writes. What makes a difference is how you take advantage of the opportunities that new technologies offer for language teaching. A similar attitude is voiced by an American instructor, during the experiment that Warschauer and Meskill (2000) conducted. The instructor summarizes his careful attitude towards technology in language teaching: "It is not so much what I do with the technology, but what technology helps me get the students to do. That is what results in learning" (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000:26).

Technology must only be applied in teaching if its use contributes to the facilitation and efficiency of the learning process, as in case of its misuses the teacher might end up providing pupils with the skills of using a particular software or operating system rather than focusing on transmitting knowledge or developing a particular skill. In this case, it "would be a great disservice to young people", Chapman concludes (1998:2).

Recommendation #3: Separate or combine the roles of the teacher and technology

Even though there are certain computer-based possibilities that are irreplaceable (tools for fast information retrieval, electronic dictionary possibilities, endless exposure to the target authentic language, unlimited opportunities of 'guided practice' and knowledge consolidation, for instance), the role of the teacher in the study process cannot be replaced (Barrett & Sharma, 2009:3).

As can be deduced from the widely used term "technology-enhanced teaching", it is important to apply the benefits of technology to supplement and enhance the efficiency of a learning experience. The roles of a teacher and of technology need to be seen as complementary, and the best has to be taken from each and be efficiently combined for the best learning/teaching outcomes (Sharma & Barrett, 2009:3).

The teacher is there to do a number of things which require human intervention, such as performing a needs analysis and creating the learning syllabus. A computer may play a role in this, but decisions such as choosing a conversation topic, for example, need to be made by a professional like a teacher. Thus, it is important to separate the roles and differentiate between the contributions that teacher and technology might make in the process of

teaching – the teacher dealing with more analytical, or as Sharma and Barrett put it, "fuzzy", areas, and technologies supplementing more straightforward extra learning opportunities (2009:3).

Similar views are expressed by the Georgian education expert Giunashvili (2009:10), who adds that technology use should supplement rather than replace the role of teachers and the face-to-face learning process altogether. The same opinion is also voiced by official policy makers in Georgia, who, while talking about the necessity of bringing technology into the study process in Georgia, emphasize the need to maintain the role of a teacher and offer a balanced methodology repertoire (Tabula, 2012:1).

Recommendation #4: Help teachers overcome resistance to new teaching paradigms

Changing the teaching paradigm that teachers are used to is never easy (Dooly & Masats, 2011:43). Research shows that it is difficult to change teachers' established practices and beliefs, as they are based on their own learning experiences (Pajares, 1992). Thus, personal experiences are important determinants of how teachers think and what they do. Dooley and Masats (2011) contend that it is extremely important that teacher training programs incorporate many awareness-raising components about the significance and benefits of integration in the language teaching process. Moreover, it is important to expose teacher trainees to technology-enhanced experiences by including technology-based approaches in their trainings. Teacher trainers need to practice what they preach and make the trainees observe directly the useful effects technology-enhanced teaching can have (Dooly & Masats, 2011:44). The point made here is further reinforced by Goldsby and Fazal (2000), who conclude that only those student-teachers who master technology use for teaching purposes at university will tend to integrate it in their teaching practice (2000:121).

Recommendation #5: Support computer skills development

A considerable amount of training and technical support must be provided by the school and by policy makers to help teachers acquire basic technical knowledge. This will help avoid the frustration and disruption technology use might cause (Rozgiene et al., 2008:29). Knowing which websites, interactive materials and useful computer programs to recommend to your learners, as well as knowing how to search the Web efficiently, the use of social networking and other information and communication tools is part of the basic technology literacy that the teacher must possess. When these core skills are acquired, there are many ways they can be extended. At an advanced level, teachers may wish to learn how to adopt these tools for creating online materials or podcasts, explore virtual learning environment, or video-conferencing facilities.

Recommendation #6: Provide methodology training

According to Dooly and Masats (2011), the use of technology is often met with reservation on the part of teachers as they do not know what the pedagogical application and implication of different forms of technology are (2011:44). According to Mashira and Koehler (2003), "a teacher who is able to negotiate the relationship between content, pedagogy and technology develops a form of expertise greater than the knowledge of a disciplinary expert, a technology expert and an educator" (2003:1017).

Recommendation #7: Plan and build school infrastructure

The availability of a technical infrastructure and of resources is a basis for technology-enhanced teaching. According to Rozgiene et al. (2008), in order to make technology-enhanced teaching possible minimal technical requirements should be met by a school – at least one computer with Internet access, a printer, basic computer software, a computer lab, some technical staff, and, preferably, language learning platforms and programs (2008:30).

In this respect, situations can differ dramatically in developed and developing countries. The availability of technology and its quality as well as quantity will determine the amount and intensity of technology-based language teaching at each particular educational institution, in each particular country (Rozgien et al., 2008:28).

4.6 CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is undeniable that the scope of the opportunities technology offers in the field of education, and especially in language teaching, is extensive and emerging. In this technology-dominated era, the concept of Communicative Competence (Hymes, 1982) itself has broadened to include online communications and online language use. Thus, the application of technology in communicative language teaching is, at the same time, an efficient tool that contributes to teaching/learning languages for communication, and the medium and communication context itself. Consequently, educators might be feeling pressure these days to be devoted to the task of making technology an integral part of teaching/learning process. According to Roth (2009):

> Technology should be made a "significant component in the curriculum by drawing on Plato's goals for education and adapting and realizing them" and "the teaching and learning should be interactive, personalized and holistic" that will aid students to "move away from the passive realm of reading and into the interactive world of digital pedagogy" (Roth, 2009:127).

As already discussed earlier in this chapter (Section 5.4), alongside the opportunities that technology-enhanced language teaching offers, there are quite a few challenges and circumstances that have to be overcome for teachers to be able to make TELL realistic and feasible. These include the readiness and willingness of both the teachers and learners to engage in computer-mediated learning/teaching, proper school infrastructure, supportive school policy towards TELL, availability of technical staff, relevant assessment methods, teacher guidance and training, considerable competence and dedication on the part of the teacher to keep up with the pace of the developments and come up with appropriate pedagogical approaches to integrate technology into the language teaching in the best way possible. These are some of the factors that determine the successful adoption and implementation of technology-enhanced Communicative Language Teaching.

Even though the situation in technology-enhanced teaching varies considerably from country to country, and although developing countries are far behind the developed ones, researchers admit that developed nations suffer from many of the same challenges and concerns as developing nations, and the developing nations, by sharing and looking up to the existing experience of more developed countries, will find progress easier (Jhurree, 2005:467).

Having discussed the the possibilities that technology can offer today for communicative language teaching, in the next chapter I turn to describing the foreign, particularly English language, teaching situation in Georgia, from Soviet times up to today. Discussing this information is believed to be useful for gaining a historical perspective and to offer the reader useful information about developments in the language teaching field in Georgia. This will help shed better light on the current language teaching situation in Georgia as well as providing a more comprehensive understanding of the need for and significance of the research presented in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 5: FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN GEORGIA: FROM SOVIET TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY[1]

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having discussed language teaching history in brief (Chapter 2), Communicative Language Teaching in more detail (Chapter 3), as well as how present-day language teaching can be enhanced by using the resources technology on offer today (Chapter 4), in this chapter I attempt to discuss the history of foreign language teaching in Georgia from Soviet times until the present day. Putting the teaching of foreign languages in Georgia in the socio-historical context of communist and post-communist Eastern Europe is expected to shed greater light on how socio-political trends led to major changes in foreign language policies and teaching methodologies and gave rise to the practices currently in place in Georgia.

Chapter overview

Section 5.2 of this chapter deals with the Soviet era and language teaching in the Soviet States, among them Georgia. It also discusses the socio-historical background and language policies adopted at that time in the Soviet Union. Illustrative examples of language teaching materials used in Soviet days are also presented in this section as a way of providing an insight into the careful and propagandistic approach to language teaching practised in the Soviet Union in those years. Section 5.3 is about Georgia's national transformation process in the post-Soviet period; it provides a description of the developments that took place in the language teaching field and Georgia's move towards Communicative Language Teaching. The section discusses the changes that took place in both the public and the private sectors of language teaching. Section 5.4 looks at the recent history of and current developments in the foreign language teaching field in Georgia, and efforts made by governmental and non-governmental organizations to bring it in line with Western standards. The initiatives undertaken in order to make education in general, and Communicative Language Teaching in particular, more technologically-enhanced in Georgia are described extensively in a separate Section 5.5. Concluding remarks for this chapter are presented in Section 5.6.

[1] Section 5.5 of this chapter is based on an article called "Technology as a Tool Towards Educational Reform: Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia" (Edisherashvili & Smakman 2013).

5.2 THE SOVIET ERA AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

5.2.1 Socio-historic background

Starting from the late 19th century, during the period of the Tsarist regime in Russia, and continuing through the Soviet period (1917-1991), up until the collapse of the USSR, there were targeted attempts to Russify all fifteen of the non-Russian Soviet republics (Weeks, 2008:16). This policy was dubbed *sblizheniye* or 'rapprochement' (of nations) by Moscow. Nations were meant to eventually disappear and replaced by a new species of humankind referred to as *Homo sovieticus*, which was believed to guarantee a life without nationalism in peace and harmony. Russian was therefore, in some sense, seen by the Soviet authorities as a neutral, non-ethnic language, and it remained the most widespread second language or *lingua franca* of the Soviet Union for decades. Unlike other Soviet states, Georgia showed deep-seated popular and even republic-level governmental resistance to the emerging influence of the Russian language, which was practically displacing the public use of national languages in other instances all over the Soviet Union and becoming dominant in virtually all levels of society – social, educational, governmental and military (Slider, 1995:181). Ostensibly pro-Stalinist protests in Tbilisi in the year following Stalin's death in 1953 also saw much popular outpouring of sentiment yearning for Georgian heritage and linguistic preservation. Later, in 1978, almost alone among Soviet Republics, Georgia (together with Estonia) witnessed language riots when the revised Soviet constitution sought to proclaim Russian the sole official language of the entire USSR (Olson, 1994:247).

The official fear that Soviet social ideals might crumble in the face of Western influences went as far as banning by Moscow of Coca-Cola and Levi-Strauss jeans, for instance – consumer goods strongly associated with the US as symbols of evil influences coming from the 'hostile world' beyond the Soviet Union. Many popular songs in English were also banned by the Kremlin. Thus, it was clear that Soviet authorities believed that the cultural-linguistic situation needed to be dealt with effectively in order to preserve "power" in the world (Olson, 1994:247). Hence, in an attempt to keep public opinion under control and to be able to shape popular ideology, the government was very careful in opening up the doors to ways of thinking.

In this regard, knowledge of foreign languages could play an important role: it could be used by members of the public as a means to better acquaint themselves with the values and ideology of people outside the USSR through communicating with them. For this reason, foreign language teaching had to be offered in a very cautious manner to the Soviet population. As Pavlenko (1964) recollects, in those days, foreign language teaching was "permeated with ideology and propaganda"; the English language was associated in Communist times with enemies, spies and imperialistic Britain and the United States (Pavlenko, 2003:313-314). Virtually no private language schools existed at that

time. Language teaching was offered only at state-controlled public secondary schools and institutes of higher education. To this end, teaching materials as well as teaching methods were centrally-mandated and the teaching process was carefully monitored (Pavlenko, 2003:315).

However, unlike the anti-German language teaching debates seen in the US during and after World War I, and in some cases even the prohibition of teaching or speaking German in parts of some Allied countries, in the Soviet Union the study of languages spoken by the enemies, i.e. capitalist countries of that time, was never officially discouraged (Pavlenko, 2003:321). Whereas opponents of foreign-language teaching in the US in the early twentieth century believed in an intrinsic link between language, thought, moral and cultural values, and thus sought to protect American children from undesirable influences through restricting German language teaching, Soviet educators, from the 1920s onwards, on the contrary, saw enormous possibilities in using "the language of the enemy to promote the ideological agenda of socialism and communism" (Pavlenko, 2003:322).

Increased contacts with both enemies and allies during World War I (1914-1918) made the Soviet government realize that the country had a critical shortage of people able to communicate in key foreign languages. By the end of the war, there was a growing awareness of the importance of the study of foreign language for the purposes of national security and for the economic and technological development. This realization triggered a measure of transformation in the foreign-language teaching system in the Soviet Union (Pavlenko, 2003:323).

5.2.2 Language teaching methods and aims in Soviet times

According to Ornstein (1958), the study of foreign languages was never underestimated from the very beginning of the introduction of the Soviet regime (1917). However, not until 1927, ten years after the Russian Revolution, were the first real measures taken to improve the quality and intensity of language instruction in the USSR. This was the time when a series of decrees were issued aimed at improving language teaching standards, among which were the Central Committee decree *Concerning the Elementary and Secondary Schools* (1931) and the decree *Concerning the Instructional Programs and the Regimen of Elementary and Middle Schools* (1932). In these documents, the importance of providing every secondary school graduate with proper language teaching was recognized (Ornstein, 1958:382).

As a result of the regulations provided by the new decrees, Soviet children were required to start learning foreign languages – German, English or French – from the fourth or fifth grade (at the age of 11 to 12) until the end of high school, so that pupils were provided with at least six years of exposure to foreign language instruction (Ornstein, 1958:382-383).

Even though efforts were being made in Moscow to promote language teaching, there was criticism expressed by some with regard to the results achieved. As soon as the shadow of Stalin, and of his strong personal convictions on linguistics, had receded, this began to be widely voiced. According to Ornstein (1958:384), even though "[o]fficially, the objectives of language teaching ... are stated as the ability to read, write and *speak* a foreign language", little attention was paid to developing learners' communicative abilities. Ornstein tries to explain the failure to develop language learners' communicative abilities by the existence of the teaching methods which were largely grammar- and linguistics knowledge-oriented, entailing mainly memorizing word lists, grammar rules and doing coursebook exercises as homework, together with rigorous analytical reading done in the classroom. (1958:384). Another reason named was the rigidity of the curriculum and the Iron Curtain dividing the USSR from the rest of the world, giving rise to "a shortage of teachers with first-hand knowledge of modern languages" (Ortstein, 1958:386). The approach to teaching foreign languages at that time was also strongly criticized in some professional journals, such as *Inostrannie Yaziki v Shkolakh* ("*Foreign Languages in Schools").* As Gokhlerner (1956:99) commented in the year of commencement of the "Krushchev Thaw",[2] "Grammar should not be taught as an end in itself, but as a means of teaching reading and so forth". The official coursebooks, which language instructors were obliged to use as their sole source of teaching material, also fell under harsh criticism, the main points of dissatisfaction summarized by Ortstein (1958:385) are cited below:

- an excessive amount of material to be covered
- lack of logical transition in the [material] presentation
- vagueness and verbosity of explanations
- dullness of the reading materials

The coursebooks used at schools in the early Soviet-era aimed at preparing two types of language experts: a group that would later deal professionally with the theory of language (theoretical linguists) and a group that would qualify as translators/interpreters (applied linguists). It was expected that later on, Soviet theoretical linguists would find jobs as language teachers, whereas translators would be involved in translating scientific and technical materials and

[2] "The Khrushchev Thaw is an unofficial name of the period in the history (from 1953-1964) of the USSR after the death of Joseph Stalin", referring to the relatively less oppressive period of Soviet rule under Khrushchev than was witnessed under Stalin. The term was coined by Ilya Ehrenburg, which he used in his short story published in 1954. Retrieved from http://territoryterror.org.ua/ en/ history 1953-19 64/ (accessed January 2013).

interpreters would be engaged in translating at congresses and conferences for the Soviet Union's industrial projects (Garrard, 1962:71). Thus, even though improvement of the speaking skill was an officially declared goal for language teaching in the Soviet Union, no efforts were made to provide language learners with much oral proficiency and skills which would enable them to communicate across borders, as this was expressly not in the aims of Soviet language teaching at that time.

However, further initiatives were still taken in the direction of intensifying the foreign language teaching in the Soviet Union. In the late 1940s to mid-1950s, the Ministry of Higher Education initiated the establishment of ten-year 'experimental language schools', where language instruction began from second grade onwards (Ornstein, 1954:388). The Ministry also changed the curricula of institutions of higher education, allocating more teaching hours to foreign language instruction than before, and supported the formation of certain language clubs and special institutions aimed at helping language teachers improve their teaching skills (Pavlenko, 1964:322). However as Pavlenko (1964) further elaborates, "ironically, these developments were taking place almost simultaneously with the adoption of governmental policies which prohibited marriages between foreigners and Soviet citizens and effectively restricting contacts between them" (1964:323). Such a contradictory situation created complicated the circumstances for language policy makers: they had to provide language teaching in such a way that the population's knowledge of foreign languages would empower the Soviet Union by enabling citizens to keep up to date with the developments around the world, but at the same time, they also had to protect the Soviet population from being "contaminated by the languages they were learning" (Pavlenko, 1964:323).

Another noteworthy change in the field of language teaching around that time (1940s-1960s) was the shift from the German, as the most popular foreign language taught at schools in the Soviet Union until the Second World war, to the English language, which was now perceived as the "language of diplomacy, com-merce and science" (Pavlenko, 1964:323). The shift of emphasis from the German to the English language was officially confirmed by the decree called *On the Improvement of the Study of Foreign Languages,* which was issued by the Council of Ministers of the USSR in 1961. In the same document the need for "urgent improvement of curricula and teaching materials" was also declared, naming "the poor FL speaking skills of high school and university graduates" as the main reason for such alarm (Pavlenko, 1964:323).

The strengthened emphasis placed on English language teaching was also partly caused by the growing popularity of it as an international language. Even in the city of Berlin (where the wall was built that same year: 1961), two out of the three other occupying powers that the Soviet military had to consult

with were English-speaking. Pavlenko explains the popularization of the English language in the following terms:

> The peak escalation years of the Cold War, in particular the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, there was a new global enemy on the scene, whose language children now had to learn. As a result, by 1970, in Soviet colleges, English accounted for 50% of foreign language study enrolments, with 30% in German and the remaining 20% in French. (Pavlenko, 2003:323).

In concert with efforts undertaken at the policy level, attempts were made to find an alternative to the existing language teaching method, which was mainly Grammar Translation at that time. Thus, the search for a better alternative commenced, the emphasis starting to move steadily towards more oral approaches to language teaching. The coursebook by the British author H.E. Palmer (1877-1949), *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages*, became widely acclaimed by many teachers of foreign languages in the Soviet states at that time (Ornstein, 1954:387). The Audio-Lingual Method (see Section 2.2) was actively proposed as a framework for teaching languages by Professor of Leningrad University I.E. Anchikov, as it was an approach believed to be capable of providing quicker ways of attaining in learners the required oral proficiency in a foreign language; However, Anchikov's attempts resulted in not only the approval of his followers but strong dissatisfaction on the part of the proponents of the Grammar Translation method (Ortstein, 1954:387).

As for the official regulations with regard to the use of language teaching methodology, according to Rismane, "the teachers of foreign languages had to follow the centralized curricula set by Moscow, which determined the use of the Audio-Lingual Method in language laboratories" (2008:4). The Grammar-Translation Method could also be used as a supplement to the Audio-Lingual Method. The Audio-Lingual Method remained popular in the Soviet Union throughout the 1970s and 1980s; however, later it was proven that this method provided learners with little beyond the ability to know "how (grammar) to say what (vocabulary)" in a foreign language, and resulted only in a passive process of language acquisition (Rismane, 2008:4).

Some innovative, attempts were also made at that time to replace the Grammar Translation Method, and some alternative methods started appearing, one of the most popular in the early post-Soviet period, in the 1990s, being the so-called "Express-Method" by Ilona Davidova. The author's comments, as presented on the back cover of the book are quoted below:

> Express train – method is the unique method of training entirely constructed on knowledge of laws of human memory and psychology constructed on system. "Express train - method" is specially developed program of studying of the English language, intended for people it is no time to them sit in classes, pore over textbooks.

The faulty, stilted English used in the description of the method by the author herself suggests that the students of this book were not exposed to an adequate language model and were destined to failure from the very outset. Even though this book was accepted with much enthusiasm in the beginning, as it seemed to offer 'innovative' – quick, and learners' practical needs-based – way of learning a foreign language, its popularity waned soon afterwards, leading to a realization that it was nothing but another unsuccessful attempt at riding the language teaching revolution bandwagon. It was the tried and trusted Grammar-Translation Method that never stopped being practised by large numbers of language teachers while all the other innovative fads came and went in language teaching. Moreover, Grammar-Translation still continues to be one of the most widespread methods in language classrooms in the former Soviet nations, especially popular among those teachers who do not feel the urge to employ more communicative alternatives or who are incapable of doing so.

5.2.3 Language teaching material in Soviet times

To better illustrate the language policies implemented in Soviet times, a discussion of teaching materials used in the Soviet period is also provided in this section. As mentioned above (Section 5.2.2), in order to ensure that children would not be "contaminated" by the "bourgeois" languages they were learning, the "special educational establishment" created teaching materials and curricula that were held to be of "ideological value" (Pavlenko, 1964:323). According to Pavlenko, the Soviet teaching materials offer the descriptions of "imagined" situations and interactions, which, for most Soviet language learners who were not allowed to travel abroad and were discouraged from having any contact with foreigners, would never take place in actual practice (Eerde, 1954:401).

It was through these artificial contexts that carefully selected language input was provided (Pavlenko, 1964:323). The choice of vocabulary (often military e.g. a tank, a machine gun*),* as well as the topic of the sentences illustrated mostly military objects and situations. For example, in the English grammar book by Markova (1972), the language rules were often illustrated by the examples such as "We were to launch an offensive at night" (Markova, 1972:8) and "The losses inflicted on the enemy were heavy" (1972:128; cited in Pavlenko, 1964:323). It is also interesting to note that most of the language teaching materials were published by *Voennoe Izdatel'stvo* ("The Military Publishing House").

The ideals and values inherent in Russian culture were the dominant components of the material, collectivism or equalitarianism, for instance. Consequently, many texts were replete with the sentences written from the collective "we" perspective – "we suffer together" (cited in Chipauline, 2001:20) as well as emphasizing collective moral values – "you should not despise people less fortunate than you" (Shakh-Nazarova, 1995:11), or "The young man helped his friend in trouble and in this way showed to everybody what was the right thing to do" (Bonk et al., 1973:19). According to Chipouline (2001), taking a look at the Soviet-published materials, it becomes obvious that "paradoxically, in trying to create the learning materials for the students of English, the authors of these texts focus on the values inherent in their own culture...[and while] looking in the mirror of another language, see themselves" (2001:17).

Not until its independence from the Soviet Union did the Soviet language teaching material written by Soviet authors, affected by internal as well as external political and socio-cultural realities, gradually start being replaced by British- or/and American-published teaching resources. However, even today, there are still certain teachers in ex-Soviet countries who remain loyal towards the 'traditional' type of coursebooks, discussed in the preceding paragraph, characterizing them as better serving the learners' 'academic' needs than modern teaching materials do, which they sometimes describe as focusing mainly on 'colloquial' language knowledge.

5.3 THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD AND THE MOVE TOWARDS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN GEORGIA – EARLY 1990s

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, a new socio-cultural and political paradigm was created in the post-Soviet countries: traveling, doing business or studying abroad became a real possibility, as the doors to Europe and the US opened up. Suddenly, many things had to be reconsidered by each ex-Soviet country in order for it to form a new state, one that would be independent, democratic and visible in the international arena. Consequently, numerous reforms had to be undertaken and priorities had to be redefined (Karakhanyan, 2011:17). Pavlenko comprehensively summarizes the situation at that time:

> The status quo in foreign language teaching changed drastically with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and dissolution of Eastern European socialist governments. In order to align themselves with the Western powers and gain an entry into the global market, there were strong tendencies observed in the Eastern European democracies to refashion themselves as democratic and westernized. This sociopolitical and economic change involved language teaching reforms, which stripped Russian of its privileged status and offered learners a freedom of choice between a number of languages (Pavlenko, 2003:327-328).

As language teaching became one of the preconditions for a more successful future for individuals, language policy makers as well as the population in the post-Soviet countries became aware of the need to know more foreign languages than just Russian, and to learn these languages not only for scientific or scholarly reasons, as before, but also for real-life, practical purposes. This realization certainly applied to Georgia as well – a small state with a national language[3] spoken only within its boundaries. However, in the newly-independent post-Soviet countries, including Georgia, despite clearly identified needs and directions in the language teaching field, the transition from the grammar-driven teaching practice towards a communicative one "led to the crisis" in the system (Rismane, 2008:6). Rismane tries to explain the cause by the absence of a clear methodological scheme and of an action plan for finding proper ways to integrate novelties in language teaching field in these countries. Still under the influence of Soviet living and mentality, the generation active at the governmental level in the 1990s was incapable of altering systems deeply rooted in the Soviet tradition (Rismane, 2008:6). This might explain why no significant progress was witnessed in that decade.

It was not in the governmental but in the private sector that the first attempts were made to align the post-Soviet language teaching standards then existing in Georgia with those of Europe, of which the country had started trying to become an integral part. The first private language schools began to appear in Georgia in the early 1990s, such as the International House Tbilisi, an official affiliate of International House London, followed by a number of smaller-scale language centers. At such schools, for the first time, foreign-, mainly, British-published coursebooks were introduced, one of the first of its kind being the *Headway* series by Oxford University Press, followed by other Cambridge, Longman and Macmillan publications and other internationally popular resources. Below Figure 5.1 provides an image of one of the *Headway* series coursbooks.

[3] The Georgian language is believed to belong to the group of Kartvelian, or South Caucasian, family of languages. The Georgian language has a unique alphabet, one of the fourteen original alphabets in the world, and a graphically independent alphabetic writing system, which is in no way related to the Cyrillic (which is a common misconception), or any other scripts in the world. The above explains why the studying of foreign languages might be a more difficult experience for Georgian language learners than for nations whose native tongue and script shares some commonalities with certain other languages of the world.

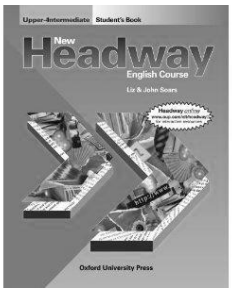

Figure 5.1: Headway Student Book[4]

These coursebooks were claimed to be based on a communicative teaching approach and to offer more interactive teaching material. Younger, more innovative, creative and motivated teachers were employed; for the first time, native-speaker language teachers were hired, which was a good start in laying a solid basis for transforming the existing form-focused language instruction into communicative language teaching. In contrast to the private language schools, not many changes or even efforts were made in language teaching at public schools and institutions in the early 1990s, and not many private secondary schools existed at that time. Private secondary schools started to emerge at the end of the 1990s - early 2000s as a result of the obvious dissatisfaction with the quality of education offered at the public secondary schools.

Attempts at changing the teaching methodology, as well as setting new learning/teaching goals for foreign language teaching at public schools in Georgia, were first made at the policy level when the Ministry of Education of Georgia issued the first communication oriented language curriculum, *State Education Standards in Foreign Languages*, in 1997. The document aimed at making language teaching in Georgia more communicative in nature and more targeted at providing the learners with more pragmatic language skills, instead of the sole knowledge of language rules and theory (State Education Standards in Foreign Languages, 1997:37). However, not much was done beyond the declared intent in this policy document to transform Georgia's language teaching system (for more discussion of the document, see Section 6.2). The situation was one where no new teaching materials, no infrastructure and no efforts on the part of the government to equip teachers with skills for adopting more innovative teaching methods were in place. Furthermore, having a generation of practicing teachers who had themselves been exposed to the traditional manner of language teaching and had never had the opportunity of target foreign language exposure (*TLG: Annual Report*, 2001:35) made it very

[4] Retrieved from http://www.andrewbook.sk/andrewbook/eshop/3-1-JAZYKY/ 0/ 1/ 9/1/ (accessed October 2012).

hard, if not impossible, to break away from the language instruction traditions in Georgia (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:36).

The creation of the Council of Europe document *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) in 2001 was another achievement in further developing language teaching worldwide. This also played some role with regard to Georgia: when Georgia joined the Council of Europe in 1999, the necessity to follow Europe's example in many areas, among them language teaching standards, became obvious.

5.4 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTION EFFORTS

After the Rose Revolution in 2003,[5]a new government, largely comprised of young, western-educated leaders came into power and initiated a process of reforms in Georgia, taking Europe and the US as a model of development in various spheres, amongst them education. Seeing foreign language proficiency as a means of bridging the gaps between Georgia and the Western world, the government saw to it that language teaching found its way to the top of the priority list of the reforms to be implemented (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:6). However, not until 2009, well into the government's second term of office, were visible efforts made to dramatically reform the field of language teaching in Georgia. "Every school child in Georgia should become an English speaker in the next four years, as part of an educational revolution", President Saakashvili declared in August 2010 (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:12). Initiatives were undertaken in various directions and will be discussed in turn in the following subsections.

5.4.1 The National Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia

First, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, under the auspices of its National Curriculum and Assessment Center (NCAC), which was established within the Ministry, developed a new language curriculum, the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL) in 2009, in consultation with external experts from a range of fields: psychologists, linguists, teachers, teacher trainers and foreign consultants. The document is based on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and is oriented towards preparing learners to be citizens equipped with practical language skills and capable of communication across borders. The first draft of the curriculum was

[5] The Rose Revolution, which took place in Georgia in November 2003, was triggered by the widespread protests over the disputed parliamentary elections. As a result of this revolution President Eduard Shevardnadze was forced to resign and new, pro-western government came into power (Teach & Learn with Georgia: Annual Report, 2011: 6).

revised, with minor changes introduced, into the present form of the document in 2011 (For a more detailed discussion on NCFL, see Chapter 6).

5.4.2 New teaching materials

Before 2010, most of the coursebooks used as compulsory teaching material at all public schools in Georgia were locally-published and compiled by Georgian authors. These coursebooks were harshly criticized by the native-speaker instructors teaching in Georgia (see also Section 5.4.4 below), who considered the poor quality of these teaching materials as a major challenge, making the teaching process almost impossible. "These coursebooks are awful, dull and full of mistakes," one of the teachers remarked, while others criticized the old coursebooks for being faulty as well as totally focused on grammar and in no way promoting learners' real-life language skills (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:47).

According to the Ministry, native-teacher reports and assessments as well as the publication of a new National Curriculum for Foreign Languages made the necessity of introducing new standard coursebooks obvious. Since 2010, coursebooks, to be allowed to be used in schools, have to go through an approval procedure (known in Georgian as *grifireba*) at the Ministry of Education's National Curriculum and Assessment Center, according to a predetermined set of criteria. The list of the Ministry-approved coursebooks are now available on the website of the Ministry, and public school teachers have to choose one of these coursebooks as their teaching material.[6]

The teaching material approval requirement contributed to the opening-up of the coursebook market in Georgia to international publishing houses that produce high quality materials (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:11) as well as to providing a guarantee that language teaching resources are compatible with the methodological principles and goals outlined in the national language curriculum. Consequently, today, only those coursebooks which are based on the modern communicative teaching methods and are claimed to be targeted at improving learners' communicative competence in a foreign language are approved for classroom use. The main supplier of the coursebooks currently on the scene in Georgia is Macmillan Publishing, and the coursebook offered by them is *English World*.[7]

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[6] See http://ganatleba.org/ index.php?m =149&pbooks=6 (accessed September 2012).

[7] See http://www.macmillaneducation.com/MediaArticle.aspx?id=1652 (accessed September 2012).

5.4.3 Priorities in teaching foreign languages

It should also be noted that all the efforts made with regard to language teaching reform and refinement, even though the importance of teaching and learning of foreign languages has also been duly recognized, have predominantly been concerned with the English language, perceived as it is as a lingua franca of social communication, diplomacy and business today. English started gaining more and more popularity among Georgians since 1991 (Tkemaladze, 2001:14) and became the primary foreign language taught at secondary schools in Georgia in 2009. According to the present language policy document (NCFL, 2011), English is a compulsory subject from the very first grade (TLR: Annual Report, 2011:11); exceptions to these requirements can be made only on special request and provided that clear explanations are given regarding why a different decision with respect to the foreign language choice or starting grade has to be taken by a concrete school (NCFL, 2011:551).

Other evidence that can be used to back up the claims made with regard to the growing popularity of English in particular, standing out among the other traditionally taught foreign languages, is the set of statistical figures cited by Tkemaladze (2001). According to Tkemaladze's study, 90.2% of school directors in Georgia consider English more popular than any other foreign language taught in schools at the moment, while 90.5% of parents and 97.1% of high school students find English to be the most useful foreign language which will help them (or, as the case may be, their children) find a decent job (2001:15).

5.4.4 The project Teach & Learn with Georgia

In order to foster the educational reforms already underway in the field of language teaching in Georgia, an ambitious initiative was undertaken in 2010 by the Ministry of Education and Science to develop a program Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG), which would help Georgians "develop their foreign language skills and foster their communication with the rest of the world". Within the framework of the project, language teachers from various, predominantly native English-speaking countries, were recruited all around the world and tasked to help Georgian schoolchildren learn languages for communication by exposing them to authentic language use as well as to cultural experiences through their language (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:12). It should be noted here that there has been no particular requirement adopted or preference shown with regard to the nationality of the teachers recruited, neither has such a norm been adopted in the official language policy document (more discussion on the language policy document, see Chapter 6). For the purposes of teaching English, British, American, Australian, and even non-native teachers fluent in the English language were equally welcome to come

and teach in Georgia. Such an approach, eventually, results in the teaching of the so-called 'international English', with no consistency or norm observed with regard to the use of any particular form of English.

The project was based on the Peace Corps model, with certain elements of the Japanese JET (Japan Education and Training) and South Korean EPIK (English Program in Korea) programs, which were adapted to the local Georgian needs (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:14; Wada, 2002:33). This project, which started in early 2010, had by 2011 already recruited one thousand native-speaker language teachers to Georgia. From the very start, the program was evaluated as being "of extremely high priority and a large step forward towards the improvement of English language teaching and learning" (TLG: Annual report, 2011:6):

> As we strive towards globalization and acknowledge the advantages of new technology, we still consider that human interaction and people-to-people communication are irreplaceable and have far more tangible or intangible benefits than any other means of communication. This is why "Teach & Learn with Georgia" is so important for a small country like Georgia that has exceptional customs and traditions and is willing to share them with the rest of the world.

The value and importance attached nationally to TLG is revealed by the fact that not only the Minister of Education at that time, but also the then President of Georgia himself, Mikheil Saakashvili, assessed the project in the following terms in August 2010: [8]

> The arrival of 10,000 English language teachers in Georgia is an event of exactly the same magnitude as when [King] David the Builder resettled 50,000 Kipchaks and the Georgian state's modernization gained an irreversible nature. If during the times of David the Builder competitiveness was measured by a military criterion, today's criterion is education. What we will do within the next few years in Georgia is a real educational revolution and nothing of this kind has been done in any of the post-Soviet states before. In the next four years, we will achieve a situation wherein every school-age child speaks English, and English will become their second language after Georgian. This will give us an opportunity to make a major breakthrough in the coming decades [unique] in the entire post-Soviet space, and that is the greatest contribution we will make to the future development of the country (Teach & Learn with Georgia: Annual Report, 2011:12).

Alongside its goal of improving foreign language proficiency, TLG was also designed to involve program participants in the monitoring procedure for

[8] Retrieved from http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22601 (accessed October 2013).

newly-introduced curricula and textbooks, which it was believed would help governmental authorities assess how language teachers and learners were coping with and implementing the novelties introduced in language teaching in Georgia (TLG: Annual Report, 2012:48).

The achievement of TLG is summarized in the *Annual Report: 2010-2011*, according to which, out of 4,200 local English teachers, up to 3,000 had a chance thanks to the program to interact with native English speakers and get to know modern teaching methods and technique; up to 50,000 local students have improved their English. The report adds that "enormous impact" has been witnessed with regard to teaching methodologies as revealed through their effect on "students' mindsets and speaking skills" (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:13). In the document, it is concluded that all of the main goals of the project in terms of local teacher development have been achieved and that "TLG was an absolute success and a true language and culture revolution" (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:28, 40). As for the external evaluation of the project, some testimonials presented in a *New York Times* article, "American Voices, Far from Home" (January 23, 2011), by young American teachers teaching in Georgia provide interesting insights as well. Rhonda Gibson, aged 24, from New Orleans, reports:

> The program is a work in progress. I won't say there aren't holes in the foundation and cracks in the ceiling. But there is an evolution within the program as they learn how to adapt to us, the Westerners (*New York Times*, Rhonda Gibson, January 23, 2011).

Another 23-year-old American teacher in Georgia, James Norton, comments:

> Teach & Learn with Georgia is a good program, and I hope it's a worthwhile investment in Georgia's future. It's a relatively inexpensive way to bring an outside perspective on the education system – like hiring a consulting firm but without the cost – as long as the Ministry of Education will listen to feedback from the teachers.

This program, however, also necessitated a number of improvements to, as acknowledged by Norton in the same *New York Times* article:

> We have awful facilities, no materials and, most importantly, no culture of academic accountability or expectations [...]. In a way, though, it's like buying an espresso machine before you've built a kitchen. There are so many obstacles preventing this cadre of foreign teachers from doing their jobs effectively, and I often wonder whether the government would be better off focusing on fundamentals first – buying books for all students, training teachers in modern techniques (as opposed to the translation-and-memorization doctrine that is currently rampant. (*New York Times*, Norton, January 23, 2011)

With another change of government in Georgia in 2012, the TLG project was suspended. However, the claimed positive effect of this program on the language teaching situation in Georgia was one of the motivating factors for me to explore the real state of affairs of language teaching in my country today and assess how efforts made have reached its final target.

5.4.5 Professional development of language teachers

The realization that the introduction of new approaches and methods necessitated appropriate teacher preparation prompted the government of Georgia to start making efforts in this direction. The National Center for Teacher Development (NCTD) produced a document, *Language Teacher Professional Standards*, in 2009, that outlines the theoretical knowledge as well as practical teaching and interpersonal skills which a language teacher has to possess to be eligible for language instruction in the state sector (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:10).

To further contribute to the improvement of teaching quality, the passing of the Teacher Certification Exam was also made obligatory by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in 2010. Policymakers justified the reasons for introducing such examinations for teachers in the following way: "The Teacher Certification process will support the regulation of the teaching profession, support the planning of Continuous Professional Development and trigger significant improvements in the teaching and learning process overall."[9]

Government-accredited language teacher training centers were set up soon after to help teachers prepare for the exams and improve their practictcal teaching skills. The institution Teachers' House was also opened in Tbilisi in October 2011 for the same purpose.[10] As mentioned above, Macmillan Education, besides providing the biggest share of coursebooks to the Georgian schools at that time, was also involved in teacher training provision to Georgian teachers. According to TLG: Annual Document (2011), beginning from June to August 2011, Macmillan trained around 4,200 Georgian teachers of English in the new methodology of working with their coursebooks, such as *English World* (2011:12).

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[9] Retrieved from http://tpdc.ge/index.php? action=page&p_ id =4 39&lang=geo). (accessed October 2012).

[10] Retrieved from http://mes.gov.ge/ content. php? Lang =eng&id=2883) (accessed 2013 October).

5.4.6 Efforts of non-governmental organizations in Georgia

Some of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in developing the language teaching, and particularly English language teaching (ELT), field in Georgia are ETAG (the English Teachers' Association in Georgia) and the British Council. ETAG, registered in January 1995 as a non-governmental and non-profit organization in Georgia, which now has representatives in nine cities in the country. Their members are school and university teachers of English from the state and private sectors. ETAG's declared goal is to improve the standard of English teaching in Georgia through the provision of professional consultancy and training, as well as through supporting the introduction of more effective teaching methods and materials. In close cooperation with the British Council, the US Embassy, the Open Society – Georgia Foundation, the Know-How Fund, the Eurasia Foundation and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), ETAG has been very active in contributing to ELT development by organizing various teacher training, conferences, seminars and presentations for its member teachers. They have published a coursebook for trainee teachers, *A Pre-service Teacher Training Course. Becoming an English Teacher: Theory and Practice of Teaching English in Georgia,* as well as a 45-page Trainer Manual which provides many communicative activities for teachers to use in the classroom (Tsitsishvili et al., 2006), and aims at making teachers aware of the theories behind EFL teaching while preparing them for their initial teaching experiences in the classroom. The publication of English language coursebooks and the provision of some teacher training courses, in cooperation with the British Council and the US Embassy, have also been among ETAG's professional activities (More information about this organization can be found on http://etag. ge).

Another extensive research project in the field of English language teaching in Georgia conducted by the ETAG team was *A Baseline Study in English Language Teaching and Learning in Georgia* (Tkemaladze et al., 2001), widely referred to in this dissertation. ETAG, in cooperation with the British Council, carried out a survey to find out the current state of English language teaching in Georgia in order to draw up a detailed description of the situation and to provide policymakers with an objective account of key aspects of English language teaching in the country. The findings of this research, which dealt with school directors, English teachers and students, first-year university students, parents, in-service and pre-service teacher trainers, helped identify the areas in foreign language teaching which needed urgent intervention at that time.

With regard to the professional development of language teachers, a positive change observed in the private sector is the in-country availability of the Cambridge University administered CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching) course since 2010, offered by the International House

Tbilisi. CELTA is an internationally-recognized teacher training course, a very sought-after qualifi-cation in the field of English language teaching worldwide.

5.5 TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN GEORGIA

In Georgia, the need to keep up with the progress in technology-enhanced teaching and the modern tendencies of the Western world (discussed in Chapter 4) has been widely recognized. The Georgian educational magazine *The Teacher*, which aims at supporting Georgian teachers' professional growth and help them stay up to date and informed about the modern theoretical as well as practical developments in the field of education, has been actively offering its audience at least one article about computer use in teaching in almost every one of its issues since 2010.[11] Thus, in the subsections that follow, the initiatives and efforts made by the Government of Georgian in this direction will be discussed.

5.5.1 Developments in Technology-Enhanced Language Teaching

Integrating new technologies in teaching in Georgia has been one of the priorities of the education policy makers in the past few years. The language teaching field, and particularly if communicative language teaching is the aspiration in Georgia, is believed to strongly benefit from wider scale integration of technology and the resources it offers (Nafetvaridze, 2012:55). Georgia might not be very far advanced in the area of technology-enhanced teaching at this point, but much progress can be observed in this direction (Asatiani, 2011:38).

An early sign of the awareness of the need to enhance the efficiency of the education by the technology use surfaced when the Government of Georgia initiated a project aimed at providing first-grade pupils of public primary schools with locally produced mini laptops called Buki, which have also been exported to some countries abroad (Tabula, 2012:1).

[11] See the website of the Ministry of Education of Georgia: http://www.tpdc.ge (accessed December 2013).

Picture 5.1: First-graders at a public school in Georgia, using mini computers called Buki[12]

This initiative was widely welcomed by schools, as well as by pupils and their parents; starting from 2011, within the framework of the National Program, *My first Computer*, "Buki" laptops (a name which refers to the English word "book", with the Georgian suffix 'i', at the end) have been provided to all first-graders in Georgia. The computers offer pupils language practice programs together with other educational teaching resources, some of which are already installed on the computer, while others can be downloaded from the website specifically created to provide additional study materials for the "Buki" laptop[13]. The Internet connection on these laptops enables learners to connect with more resources and learning opportunities available online, most of which are in English.

Schools need to prepare the students for present challenges by exposing them to new technologies (Tabula, 2012:2). The introduction of laptops is not the only sign of the efforts made towards implementation of technology-enhanced teaching in Georgia. Since 2011, the so-called "Future Classes" – high-tech computer labs – have been installed in eighty schools around Georgia. These classrooms, which are equipped with the latest technology resources, make the use of pens, pencils or books redundant. Interactive White Boards and monitors are used instead, which makes things like saving and retrieving electronic versions of earlier lessons possible for the teachers as well as the learners. All the Future Classes are connected digitally, and students can collaborate in the learning process in many ways (Tabula, 2012:2). The project aims at preparing young learners for a full integration and functioning in the computer-dominated world, where they will need to have computer skills and computer literacy (Tabula, 2012:1). Below, a picture illustrating a lesson held in one of the "Future Classes" is presented.

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[12] Image retrieved from http://www.buki.ge (accessed September 2014).

[13] For more information about "Buki" laptops and "Future Classes", see the video at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y9aC5LHb6k (accessed September 2014).

Picture 5.2: "the Future Class" in Tbilisi[14]

The introduction of modern technologies into teaching since 2011 has been accompanied by teacher training sessions in general computer use (Ingorokva, 2011:15). However, it seems that teacher preparation and the quality and quantity of the technologies available presently at schools in Georgia are still an issue. As the integration of computer-based teaching is a recent change in the education system in Georgia, not much research is available to answer the question whether teachers and learners are adapting to the change. However, some anecdotal evidence is available provided by foreign language teachers who taught at public schools in Georgia (More information about foreign language teachers teaching in Georgia is available in Section 5.4.4). One American teacher comments on his experience in teaching English in Georgia. He says that he faced considerable obstacles in his teaching practice, which was mainly related to the lack of classroom equipment and material (Heyn, 2011:1).[15] "Classrooms are ill-prepared, the only tools being a chalk and a book. Printers are non-existent. As for the visual aids – well, only if the teachers want to carry their laptops to school every day," another English instructor remarks. Even though the schools that these teachers are referring to are located in the rural areas, and the comments cannot be automatically applied to the schools in the bigger cities of Georgia, the examples provided illustrate the fact that there is still much to be improved in order to support technology-enhanced teaching throughout the whole country.[16] Yet, snother teacher makes the following comment regarding the situation at schools in the capital: "Computers and the Internet may be in schools but teachers do not

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[14] Image retrieved from http: //primetimenews.ge/?page=14&news_id=361 (accessed September 2012).

[15] Teach and Learn with Georgia produces results but faces obstacles, 2011, January 25, *NYTimes*.

[16] American Voices, Far From Home, 2011, January 23, *NYTimes*.

know how to use them. And not every school is as well equipped as School No. 51" (*TLG: Annual Report*, 2011:15).

5.5.2 Proliferation of computer literacy in Georgia

It is important to note that, before a modern technology progress reached the schools, dramatic changes have been made in terms of overall Internet availability and accessibility in Georgia in recent years, leading to numerous societal transformations and, eventually, making the above–mentioned technological advancement in the field of education of Georgia possible. Tsitsishvili (2001), who investigated the situation related to English Language Teaching (ELT) material and technology use in Georgia in 2001, reported that the cassette recorder was the only piece of technology used, if at all, by Georgian teachers in those days (Tsitsishvili, 2001:55). In 2002, there was one computer per 707 students in Georgian schools with an average of 0.3 computers per school. As a result of the Deer Leap Project, by 2007, 800 schools were connected to the Internet, with 7,000 computers installed and 70% of teachers receiving training in technology applications.[17] Thus, there has been some progress witnessed in terms of modernization of educational institutions with technologies in Georgia since those days, naturally making application of technology in language teaching more realistic than before.

Further steps were taken in this direction when the Georgian Internet service company, Magti, signed a contract with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia to connect 2,000 public schools (including schools in rural and high-mountain areas) to the Internet by the end of 2011. In addition, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia initiated the establishment of the *"Society of Computer Knowledge Proliferation*". The organization was officially launched on May 10, 2012 at Ilia Chavchavadze House-Museum in Kvareli; the venue of the launch was of symbolic importance, as it was exactly at this place where the "Society of Literacy Proliferation" had been established in the 19th century by the famous Georgian writer and a political figure, Ilia Chavchavadze (1837–1907).[18] This fact underlines the significance of the event and the acknowledgement of the need to promote computer literacy among Georgian society in the 21st century in the same way as the importance of proliferating literacy was acknowledged in the 19th century.

Teaching languages, especially English, and trying to make learners computer literate, are well-interconnected: language proficiency contributes greatly to being better at, for example, using the Internet and navigating the web more efficiently. At the same time, having computer-based resources

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17 Retrieved from https: //sites.google.com/site/countryofgeorgia/it-skills/(accessed September 2012).

18 Retrieved from http: //cida.ge/news_eng.php?id=729&page_name=ar (accessed September 2012).

available provides a sea of opportunities for learning languages (Son**,** 2008:34). So, language teaching and improvement of computer literacy go hand in hand and many efforts can be observed in both of these directions in Georgia[19].

The discussion in this as well as in the previous section, illustrates that both governmental and non-governmental sectors involved in language teaching have been taking initiative and making efforts to transform the post-Soviet language teaching tradition in Georgia into a Western, communicative and more pragmatic form of language instruction.

5.6 CONCLUSION

As the information discussed in this chapter reveals, many changes have been taking place in the ELT field in Georgia since Soviet times up until today, and the situation is still in the process of transformation. The importance and priority of providing Georgian language learners with a proper quality language education, however, has never ceased to be prioritized since Georgia's independence. The need to increase the number of people in the population who can communicate effectively in foreign languages, particularly in English[20] has never been underestimated. It has been duly realized that for a small country like Georgia, whose national language, Georgian[21], is spoken only within its borders, knowing foreign languages becomes a means for cross-border communication and for stronger integration into the rest of the world; certain governments, as well as private organizations and institutions have been able to contribute more to the process of language teaching improvement than the others. To what extent the efforts made so far have been reflected on the overall situation in the language teaching field in Georgia is an area that has been investigated and is described later in this dissertation (Chapters 7 - 10). Before moving to analysis of the practical situation, I look in the following chapter into the official requirements with regard to foreign language teaching adopted in Georgia today. For this purspose, the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia (*Erovnuli Sastsavlo Gegma Uckho Enebshi, 2011*) is analyzed in detail.

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19 For more discussion about Georgian experts views on technology-enhanced education, see the article by Edisherashvili & Smakman (2013).

20 As mentioned in Section 5.4.4, no special emphasis has been placed neither on teaching British or American English in Georgia. It can be observed that the adopted teaching materials tend to be more British-published than American. However, the teachers who were hired in the framework of TLG program were from Britain as well as the US and other English-speaking countries.

21 For more information about the Georgian language, see Chapter 5, footnote 3.

CHAPTER 6: FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING POLICY IN GEORGIA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of how closely the foreign language policy currently in place attains its ultimate goal in actual practice at secondary schools in Tbilisi is the major research question of the present dissertation. All the other, more concrete, research questions that are presented and explored in detail in the four analysis chapters that follow (Chapters 7 - 10), are woven around this core question related to the foreign language teaching policy document of Georgia. Hence, to provide the basis and a point of reference for the analysis chapters, the existing National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL, 2001), its structure, priorities, goals and standards are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Chapter Overview

Section 6.2 is about the stages that led to the creation of the present language curriculum in Georgia. Section 6.3 describes the current NCFL, its goals, teaching organization, and the recommended assessment system (6.3.1). This section also describes the Foreign Language Standards provided in the curriculum (6.3.2) as well the recommended contents of the syllabus for foreign languages (6.3.3). Finally, Section 6.4 provides a summary and a discussion related to the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages: its orientation towards the principles of communicative language teaching (6.4.1), recommended assessment forms (6.4.2), some inconsistencies and issues observed in the NCFL (6.4.3); the last subsection 6.4.4 provides final remarks about the role of the NCFL in transforming the language teaching in Georgia, and the requirements and potential challenges on the way to ultimate success.

6.2 A WAY TOWARDS THE CURRENT NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

As discussed in Section 5.3, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and especially by joining the Council of Europe in 1999, Georgia chose an irreversible course towards the Western world. Acknowledging the importance of language teaching as a tool for moving closer to the Western world, and with the goal in sight of preparing multilingual citizens of the country who could appreciate the cultures of and communicate with speakers of other European languages, radical reforms started to be undertaken in the language teaching field in Georgia (Tkemaladze, 2001:14).

The creation and further revisions of the new policy document relating to the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Georgia was one of the efforts made in this direction (for information about other initiatives undertaken in Georgia to reform the field of foreign language teaching, see Section 5.4). The first foreign language policy paper which was based on the principles of communicative language teaching was called State Education Standards in Foreign Languages (1997). It was drawn up by the State National Institute of Pedagogical Sciences in 1997 (Tkemaladze, 2001:18). Discussing the document, Tkemaladze (2001) remarks: "The standards contain the elements of the communicative approach to teaching and represent a comprehensive guide for the transition from a grammar-translation to a communicative approach to teaching" (2001:19). The language teaching/learning standards and the curriculum of 1997 was a landmark in the history of language teaching in Georgia since it was for the first time that not only the knowledge of the form of the language but also the acquisition of practical, communicative skills was an officially declared goal of foreign language teaching. In the State Education Standards in Foreign Languages it says: "A student must be able to realize his knowledge in speech activities" (1997:38).

However, despite an attempt to move closer to Communicative Language Teaching, as Tkemaladze stated in 2001, the actual reality – the communicative nature and quality of foreign language teaching in Georgia – remained far from satisfactory. The issues, such as the teachers' lack of awareness and knowledge of the language policy document; the incompatibility between policy requirement and the classroom practicalities, as well as the lack of competence and skills on the teachers' part to comply with the new standards and requirements laid down in the document, remained critical.

The extent of influence that a new language curriculum exerted on the foreign language testing system used in Georgia was also evaluated by Tkemaladze as unimportant; the issue of assessment formats used at that time were seen even more problematic in the light of the new, more Communicative Language Teaching paradigm emerging in Georgia (2001:18-19). In the exams, Tkemaladze claimed, it was the students' memory that was tested, since it was the knowledge of prepared content that was assessed rather than the learners' ability to produce spontaneous
spoken language. Also, in most of the tests adopted in schools in Georgia, neither speaking nor listening components were included. Thus, Tkemaladze poses legitimate questions in 2001 with regard to the communicative language policy document released in 1997. They may be listed as follows:

- Is the new curriculum for foreign languages of Georgia only an official document or does it truly help prepare students for real-life communi-cation?
- Are the teachers aware of and familiar with the document?
- Do teachers follow communicative teaching requirements outlined in the document?

- To what extent are the new language standards considered while compiling the tests? (Tkemaladze, 2001:19)

These questions seem still relevant today with respect to the current National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL), issued in 2011, and English language teaching situation today in Georgia.

6.3 THE CURRENT NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES

In 2009, the State Education Standards in Foreign Languages (1997), briefly discussed in the previous section, was replaced by a new document – the Natinal Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL), which was further revised into its current form in 2011. It is stated in the NCFL (2011) that "*[p]roviding proficiency in foreign languages constitutes the main goal of the National Education Curriculum, serving the State's national as well as international interests…it is linguistic proficiency through which the process of approximation to the culture and the values of the western world becomes more tangible and realistic"* (NCFL, 2011:548). It is also claimed in the document that it is based on "three key pillars: information, skills and attitudes" provision (TLG: Annual Report, 2011:7). Thus, it can be observed that today the emphasis is put on broader goals of foreign language teaching in Georgia, which go beyond teaching foreign languages for academic purposes only and encompass socio-political and cultural value as well.

The NCFL comprises three sections: 1. A General Introduction; 2. Language Standards; and 3. Recommended Syllabus Contents. Figure 6.1 below outlines the structure of the document.

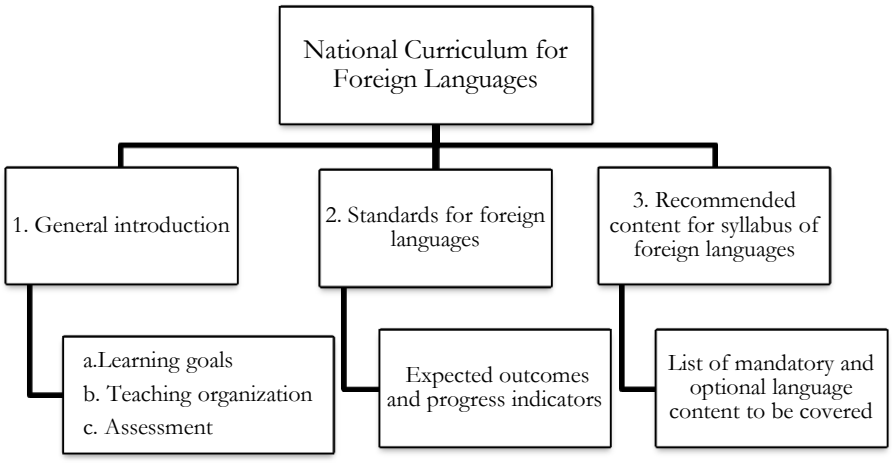

Figure 6.1 Structural organization of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages

Each of the sections as well as the sub-sections presented in the above graph will be summarized below.

6.3.1 General introduction to the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages in Georgia

The general introduction to the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages describes the new goals of foreign language learning in Georgia, as well as the organization of teaching and assessment formats, which are shortly summarized in Subsections (a), (b) and (c) below.

(a) Learning goals

This section of the NCFL (2011) describes general goals of foreign language learning in Georgia. These goals are categorized into three thematic groups: (1) the knowledge of language form: of grammar, lexis, pronunciation; (2) language skills (speaking, writing, listening, reading) and Communicative Competence (linguistic, socio-cultural, strategic) acquisition; (3) the development of positive overall attitudes towards the target foreign language (NCFL, 2011:1-12).

All the above discussed goal areas are constituent parts of the wider concept of Communicative Competence (for more information about Communicative Competence, see Section 3.3.3); this fact is indicative of the call for a shift from an entirely form-focused to a more skills- and communication-oriented teaching practice. This assumption can further be reinforced by looking at the end-of-the-year goals presened in the document: they are outlined in the form of competences rather than grammatical structures and vocabulary lists. The learning goals section for each school cycle (primary, secondary, high) is concluded with the following statement: "At the end of this cycle, the learner *must be able to* —", followed by the communicative skills that pupils are expected to demonstrate in actual practice, rather than demonstrating atheoretical, form-based knowledge (National Curriculum for Foreign Languages, 2011:550).

(b) The organization of foreign language teaching across school education cycles

Three foreign languages are included in the NCFL: two compulsory and one optional (NCFL, 2011:1). Figure 6.2 shows at which stage of school education the first, second and third (optional) foreign language instruction must/may start. The figure also reveals how attempts are made to calibrate the national

standard levels of language proficiency with those of the CEFR[1], thus promoting a standardized and internationally recognizable assessment format (NCFL, 2011:553). Unlike CEFR, the nationally-determined levels show not only the proficiency indicators, but also provide learner age-related information. This is done by indicating the school cycle[2] – primary (p): 6-13-year-old, secondary (s): 14 -15-year-old; high (h): 16-17-year old learners.

		Primary (P)						Secondary(S) / High(H)					
Target Foreign Language	**Grade**	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Foreign language 1	Standard Level	P-01	P-02	P-I	P-II	P- III	P-IV	S-II/ SIII	S-III/ S-IV	S-IV/ S-V	H-V/ HVI	H-VI/ H-VII	H-VII/ H-VIII
	CEFR Level			A1.1	A1.2	A2.1	A2.2	A2/ B1.1	B1.1/ B1.2	B1.2/ B1.3	B1.3/ B1.4	B1.4/ B1+	B1+/ B2
Foreign Language 2	Standard Level							H-I	H-II	H-III	H-IV	H-V	H-VI
	CEFR Level							A1	A2	B1.1	B1.2	B1.3	B1.4
Selective Foriegn Language 3	Standard Level									H-I		H-II	H-III
	CEFR Level									A1		A2	B.1.1

Figure 6.2: Language teaching organization at schools in Georgia (NCFL, 2011:552)

[1] *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* was created by the Council of Europe in 2001 with an aim to provide "a means of developing language teaching in Europe by finding a way to compare the goals and achievement standards of learners in different national (and local) contexts (Morrow, 2004: 6).

[2] In Georgia, schools are comprehensive, and all three cycles of school education – primary, secondary and high – can be received by attending the same school. The first 9 years of school education are compulsory. Learners willing to go to university need to complete 12 years at school. There are public as well as private schools in Georgia. The education system in Georgia is decentralized; public schools are autonomous and publicly funded, whereas private schools are privately owned and funded by privately paid tuition (for more information about the schools in Georgia, see Chapter 7, footnote 3).

This information presented in the figure above is useful for choosing appropriate teaching material (and is also widely used for coursebook approval procedures; for more information see Section 5.4.2), as well as for the purposes of determining teaching and testing methodology. The NCFL and its requirements apply to public as well as private schools where language profi-ciency goals are concerned; however, there is more freedom of action with regard to when language teaching should start, and how many foreign languages should be introduced, at private schools.

(c). The recommended language proficiency assessment system and its constituent components

As mentioned above, the current foreign language curriculum sets out to define not only what students need to know in a foreign language, as earlier curricula did, but also stresses primarily what learners have to be able to do with the language in order to be considered linguistically proficient. Consequently, the system of assessment of foreign language proficiency proposed in the NCFL is also considerably different from that of its predecessor. The section of the NCFL called Assessment of Foreign Languages (2011:559-564) deals with this area. The assessment proposed in the document is subdivided into two components: ongoing assessment – assessment of homework and class work, and final assessment – assessment of the end-of-semester/year progress (2011:561).

In the NCFL, for the ongoing assessment all the components of Communicative Competence (for more discussion, see Section 3.3.3) are suggested to be checked: linguistic, discourse, cultural as well as strategic. The recommended testing formats include discrete tests (e.g., fill-in-the-gaps and multiple choice exercises) as well as integrative testing (checking learners' overall language proficiency through language skills, predominantly speaking). For further discussion on testing formats, see Section 10.2.3.

As for the final assessment in a foreign language recommended in the NCFL, learners are required to demonstrate language skills and competences which must correspond with the requirements defined by the Language Standards presented in the second section of the curriculum (see in the following section). Hence, learners' proficiency is recommended to be assessed through language skills only, using communicative tasks, such as role plays, discussions, and presentations. The pre-defined criteria are also provided in the NCFL for the final assessment purposes (NCFL, 2011:563; see the sample assessment schemes in Appendix 6.1).

6.3.2 Standards for foreign languages

Section 2 of the NCFL (2011:564-663) provides a list of standards for each level of language proficiency, and for each school cycle (from P-01 to H-VIII)[3]. The proficiency standards, or teaching goals, are generic in nature in order to encompass all foreign languages included in the language curriculum of Georgia: English, French, German and Russian. Language-specific guidelines are provided in the curriculum with regard to syllabus content only. The language proficiency standards define which language competences have to be met by the end of the academic year in seven different goal areas: 1. listening; 2. reading; 3.writing; 4. speaking; 5. Learning to learn; 6. inter-cultural dialogue; 7. language use.

So-called Goal Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 – which deal with language skills – address issues such as what teaching approach should be adopted, what kind of teaching material should be used and what kind of classroom procedure should be followed in the lesson during each school cycle in order to achieve the required competences in the areas of speaking, writing, listening and reading.

Goal Area 5, Learning to learn, is concerned with the learning process itself: developing learning strategies, independence, creativity and efficient study management, and analytical skills in learners; the goal of this area is to develop the potential for lifelong learning in pupils. Producing self-assessment grids and personal diaries are suggested as one of the means to serve the aforementioned purposes.

Goal Area 6, Inter-cultural dialogue, focuses on the importance of learning about the culture of the target language and the interconnection between the two. Through comparison of different beliefs and cultural experiences, learners are believed to acquire better understanding of themselves as well as of others. This type of awareness, according to the document, will help learners understand the underlying values and norms of the target foreign language, which constitutes an essential part of effective communication (Bhabha, 1992:57-64).

Finally, Goal Area 7, Language use, addresses the social aspect of language learning, namely, equipping learners with communicative skills which will enable them to interact efficiently with individuals of different nationalities and social backgrounds (NCFL, 2011:558-559).

Each goal area contains from 16 up to 36 language standards, which outline communicative, linguistic and strategic language goals to be achieved in each goal area during each study cycle. Each standard is accompanied by progress indicators, defining the form in which a given language competence can be manifested (see NCFL, 2011:565). Also, one of the major observations that can be made with regard to the Language Standards is the shift in focus

[3] P=Primary school cycle; H=High school cycle (see also Section 6.3.1, Figure 6.2).

from "learner knows about" towards "the learner can…" or "the learner has necessary skills to…". This is a positive indicator of the attempt being made in Georgia to move from form-focused towards a more competence-based, pragmatic approach to foreign language teaching. This is also a sign that the country is trying to move closer to the CEFR standards, and thus to more communicative ways of teaching. After all, it is the assessment system offered in CEFR, which is entirely based on "the learner can…" statements as their proficiency assessment criteria, which is claimed to have greatly contributed to the transformation of the language learning/teaching experience from a "what do I know about the language" to a "what can I do with it" paradigm, leading to the further development and elaboration of the communicative methods of teaching as well as assessment (Maes, 2012:112). Other assessment organizations that likewise take "can do" statements as the main criteria for their assessment include ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe), and DIALANG, which is "an online diagnostic language assessment system designed to assess language proficiency in 14 European languages".[4] So, in this sense, Georgian language teaching policy can be perceived as sharing the principles adopted in foreign language teaching and testing in Europe.

When comparing the Language Standards presented in the Georgian language policy paper with those found in other Western language curricula, certain similarities as well as differences can be identified. In the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning of the United States (1995), for example, it is stated that the Goal areas focus on "what learners can do with the language" (Schwartz, 2002:115), which, as we have already seen, is also true for the Goal areas of the Georgian document; however, in the US curriculum, it is further emphasized that progress along the path of teaching method improvement can be witnessed in the document through the obvious shift it entails from the representation of language ability as consisting of language skills (listening, writing, speaking and reading) and linguistic components (grammar, lexis and pronunciation) to an encouragement instead to focus on the "discoursal and socio-cultural features of language use" (Schwartz, 2002:115).

As for the Goal areas in the Georgian document, these still include language skills; however, socio-cultural, strategic as well as practical aspects of language learning are also covered (see the seven goal areas described above). The multiplicity of the Standards goals and indicators is also a feature that distinguishes the Georgian curriculum from its Western counterpart: whereas only up to twelve Standards per goal area are presented in the US curriculum, the Standards in the Georgian one, as mentioned above, range from 16 to 36 each, and are very detailed and explicit. This can potentially be confusing to the end-users of the document – language teachers.

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[4] *Software Dialang.* (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/iss/software/page/index . p hp ?softwaretitle=Dialang&instance=1_br (accessed September 2013).

6.3.3 Recommended contents of syllabus for foreign languages

The National Curriculum for Foreign Languages comes with a detailed syllabus for each foreign language taught at schools in Georgia: a detailed inventory of grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation recommendations. For each area of language, the "recommended" materials and structures are presented, normally in a form of a list (for samples of the recommended contents, see Appendix 6.2).

The syllabus also includes recommendations with regard to the contents that deal with the cultural and social aspects of language learning, as well as phonology and orthography practice. Some teaching-related guidance and instruction tips are also included in this section of the document.

In providing the suggested contents, some recommendations regarding the form of teaching is also given, namely, in the document it is emphasized that teaching of all aspects of a foreign language should be based on communicative teaching principles. For example, in the NCFL, in the section dealing with grammar instruction, while discussing ways of presenting grammar, we read: "Memorizing rules is to be discouraged; grammar rules always have to be presented in context and students have to be given a chance to guess the meaning and function of a structure themselves and be provided with an opportunity to use new structures in a communicative way" (NCFL, 2011). The quote reveals that the teaching of language grammar and forms still is remains important, however, it is equally significant that communicative principles are applied while presenting, explaining and practising new forms and structures.

6.4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

6.4.1 Communicative basis of the NCFL of Georgia

Having looked at the Georgian National Curriculum for Foreign Languages and having described its constituent parts, I will now attempt to summarize and draw conclusions with regard to how compatible the Georgian language curriculum is with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and to assess the quality of the document. The importance of identifying the links between a language curriculum and theories of language teaching is emphasized by Hall, as well as Schwartz (cited in Savignon, 2002:117-118). According to Schwartz (2002), "if the standards are to promote long-lasting reform, the underlying theory, which is the glue connecting the [learning goals], must be clarified and conveyed" (2002:118). Orientation of a given language curriculum can be easily identified through the contents and pedagogy adopted in it (Schwartz, 2002:115); as Breen and Candlin (1980) put it:

> The content of a communicative curriculum is specified by first designating a selected repertoire of communicative performances that ultimately will be

> required of the learners. Based on this repertoire, specific competences assumed to underlie successful performance are identified (cited in Savignon, 2002:115).

In the Georgian language curriculum, the communicative performance repertoire is designated as Goal Areas, whereas more specific competences are designated as Language Standards. A quick scan of the Goals and Standards presented in the Georgian language curriculum makes it clear that they support the communicative competence-based teaching model, as they cover all of the constituent components of what is known as Communicative Competence: linguistic, socio-cultural, strategic and discourse. This assumption is further confirmed by the fact that presenting Goal Areas as language learning objectives, instead of as lists of certain language forms and structures as was done previously, is considered by many to be "reflective of a new and therefore innovative proficiency paradigm" (Schwartz, 2002:119).

The adoption of CEFR language proficiency level indicators, as well as a standardized language skills assessment format, can be considered as an attempt made in Georgia to calibrate the country's national foreign language standards with the CERF language proficiency levels. This means fully supporting the principles of CLT and in this way trying to make the NCFL of Georgia more congruent with European standards of language instruction.

6.4.2 The recommended assessment format for foreign languages in Georgia

The assessment system is another important part of the curriculum, one that largely reveals the theoretical underpinnings of the document. The evidence of the underlying communicative theory that the present Georgian language curriculum provides can be summarized as follows: a shift from exclusively written, form-focused language proficiency evaluation, which was mainly aimed at revealing the learners' linguistic knowledge, to a more comprehensive one, the declared aim of which is to test both the linguistic and the communicative aspects of students' language competence (see Appendix 6.1). The existence of progress indicators which accompany the Language Standards, formulated in "the learner can…" statements against which the proficiency level should be measured, is also a clear indication of a declared will to move towards Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia.

6.4.3 Some inconsistences and issues observed in the NCFL

Despite the clearly communicative nature of the present Georgian language curriculum, some inconsistencies can be observed as well with regard to its communicative nature. For example, in the speaking assessment scheme, under the Communicative Skills assessment area (see Appendix 6.1, Table 6.1a), the following progress discriptors are included: "The learner can describe/report the sequence of events appropriately", as well as "The learner is able to specify the

exact time of events", areas which should be assigned rather to the linguistic ability category. So it becomes unclear how communicative proficiency can be assessed by looking at these aspects of learners' performance only. According to CLT theory, oral communication ability is comprised of competence indicators such as an ability to use communicative strategies: paraphrasing, body language, clarification, an ability to take account of the socio-cultural aspects of the language learning, all of which are largely ignored in the sample tasks provided in the NCFL of Georgia. Also, if it is learners' communicative competence that is prioritized, why does the linguistic knowledge assessment component get a higher share of points in the scheme than other more-communicative language aspects do?

The progress indicators included in the speaking assessment scheme also demonstrate a course-determined rather than real-life communication-oriented character: "Uses the grammatical constructions *covered in the course*". This might well be suspected of being conducive to a situation in which teachers assess learners' language proficiency according to how well they have memorized and studied whatever was presented in the course, rather than evaluating their general communicative proficiency.

As for the sample language task provided for learners' writing skill assessment (Appendix 6.1b), it also suffers from somewhat non-communicative characteristics. The task imposes certain artificial restrictions upon learners, and dictates the grammatical forms that have to be used. This hinders the communicative, spontaneous character of the task to be performed, the approach which is against the principles outlined in the Language Standards section of the NCFL, where it is explicitly stated that writing tasks need to be free and content-driven (2011:563).

The document section called *Recommended contents of syllabus for foreign languages* (see Section 6.3.3) provides the lists of concrete language items that are expected to be taught at each level of language teaching (see examples in Appendix 6.2). Even though in the document it is stated that the provided contents needs to be taught in a communicative manner, the provision of pre-packaged, predetermined language items does not seem to chime in with CLT theory either (see Section 3.4). According to Wada (2002), "sequencing of grammatical and syntactical structures" does not provide much "flexibility" and restricts teachers' freedom of teaching a language in a communicative manner (2002:33). Moreover, further analysis is required in order to determine how closely each and every Goal Area, together with its constituent Standards, is actually compatible with the theories of CLT – how consistently they each cover CLT principles and how clearly they are presented. However, such a task would go beyond the scope of the present chapter.

Another issue to be discussed when looking at the quality and accuracy of the theoretical principles that the present language curriculum of Georgia is based upon is that of assessing how clearly articulated, consistent and accessible

these theories and recommendations are for ordinary, practising language teachers. Curricular reform cannot take place in the absence of a clear underlying theory and an understanding of it on the part of practising teachers. According to Schwartz (2002):

> A look through the history of curricular reform and innovation reveals a continual failure to establish true change when methods and materials are disseminated without an understanding of basic theoretical issues. In the absence of a well-articulated underlying theory, the extent to which the foreign language standards can be said to represent significant redefinition of curricular goals remains unclear (2002:118).

In this sense, as one reads through the NCFL of Georgia, replete as it is with linguistic terms and theoretical references, with explicit details and recommenddations, it seems quite legitimate to speculate that the document might become the cause of some confusion for the language teachers in Georgia, unless they happen to possess a remarkably comprehensive understanding of linguistic theories as well as extensive teaching experience.

6.4.4 Final remarks

Ultimately, despite some unintentional inconsistencies that can be observed in the document, it is obvious that the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages aims to transform the traditional form-focused language instruction that Georgia has known heretofore into a communicative language learning experience for future generations of school students. The declared goal of the document, in line with the national government's European and modernizing tendencies, is to create a framework which will help equip Georgian learners with the language knowledge, competences and values they will need to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century (NCFL, 2011:548). In this respect, progress is obvious at the language policy level.

However, the challenge always remains to build upon this framework, offering teachers clear and realistic teaching recommendations and learners effective and engaging learning opportunities. The question, now, is how big the gap is between the Georgian government's initiatives as expressed in the NCFL, on the one hand, and actual English language teaching practice and its communication outcomes, on the other. The first of the analysis chapters that follows, Chapter 7, explores the situation in Georgia in this direction, and provides a certain degree of clarity about where exactly the teachers of English stand as far as their informedness about the official language requirements, their understanding of the theoretical underpinning of CLT as well as their approval of this method is concerned.

CHAPTER 7: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLT (STUDY 1)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

So far I have reviewed Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its theoretical underpinnings, its role and place among other language teaching methods, as well as the possibilities of enhancing its efficiency by integrating technological resources in the process of teaching (Chapters 2, 3 and 4); I have also explored the efforts made in Georgia to transform language teaching into a more communicative practice (Chapters 5 and 6). In the following chapters (Chapters 7–10) I turn to analyzing the data obtained as a result of the research conducted at secondary schools in Georgia.

The analysis chapters of this dissertation can be subdivided into three parts: the first part looks at the teachers' and learners' conceptions of and attitudes towards CLT (Chapters 7 and 8); the second part investigates the classroom realities in Georgia (Chapter 9) and the third considers the language learners' actual foreign language proficiency level (Chapter 10).

The present chapter aims to document how much teachers at Georgian secondary schools know about the existing language policies, how well they understand and interpret them and what assumptions they hold about the main principles of CLT, how much in favor they are of this method, and what challenges they see along the way in applying CLT in their actual teaching. This exploration is hoped to help with gaining a proper understanding of how well prepared English language secondary school teachers are in the capital of Georgia, at a theoretical level, to become successful implementers of Communicative Language Teaching in the Georgian context.

Chapter Overview

In the remainder of this section, the general background to the present study (Section 7.1.1) as well as the research questions formulated (Section 7.1.2) are presented. Section 7.2 discusses the research methodology applied in this study: the research design (7.2.1), participant characteristics (7.2.2), the research tools adopted and the materials used (7.2.3). The data collection procedures and the amount of the collected data are described in detail in Section 7.2.4. The research data were analyzed in a qualitative as well as quantitative manner. The descriptions of the data analysis approaches and methods adopted are provided in Section 7.2.5. The results obtained are discussed in the final part of the present chapter: Section 7.4 provides a summary of and the concluding comments on the study results.

7.1.1 The theoretical background and the research questions

Nowadays, the communicative value of language teaching is recognized at most secondary schools around the world. It is the approach incorporated in many official language policy documents globally (Mangubhai, 2005:32), as well as in Georgia (for more details see Chapter 6, or refer to the policy document itself).

However, the mere fact of a change in the language policies and the endorsement of the use of CLT at all schools in Georgia does not necessarily mean that the aims outlined in the policy paper are successfully implemented in practice or that the declared goals are actually achieved. Successful introduction of the language teaching policy into the language classroom starts with the familiarization of teachers with this policy, the provision of a deep and accurate understanding of the method proposed and the generation of a positive attitude towards this method (Li, 1998:677). Unless these basic preconditions are met, we can conclude *a priori* that the policy will not penetrate the actual classroom. If teachers either do not know that the policy exists or do not correctly interpret the requirements the policy document puts forward, or if they lack knowledge of the recommended method, there is a very slim chance that the policy goal will be achieved. Neither can any positive outcomes be expected if the teachers do not favor and accept the principles and the learning and teaching theories that underlie the method. As Savignon (1991:273) puts it, "in order to understand the discrepancy between the theory and practice, teachers' views should be investigated, and in case a negative attitude is observed, it should be changed into positive before any further efforts are made in this regard". According to Woods (1996), teacher persuasions inform their classroom practice to a considerable degree (cited in Mangubhai, 2005:53). As is claimed by Karakhanian (2011), "teachers' beliefs can be viewed as lenses through which they perceive innovations in teaching and have a great impact on their behavior" (2011:84). Karakhanian also cites a number of studies which document the fact that there is a strong relationship between teachers' beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning on the one hand, and their actual teaching practice on the other (Prosser & Trigwell, 1997; Archer, 1999; Dart et al., 2000). Those teachers who have a positive perception of the ongoing changes in the teaching process, and acknowledge the necessity of being equipped with new approaches in their daily practice, are much more likely to perform according to the requirements put forward by the reform than are those teachers who feel skeptical about the changes and would rather stick to "the good old practices". Thus, the teachers' attitudes towards the change becomes very important. According to Li "[h]ow teachers as the end users of an innovation perceive its feasibility is also an essential factor in the ultimate success or failure of that innovation" (1998:698).

Besides the enthusiasm teachers might feel about the newly proposed methodologies, it is important to know how much "nostalgia" they feel towards the older, more traditional ways of teaching (Goodson et al., 2006). As

Hargreaves (1994) claims, understanding the extent of the teachers' determination to adopt a new style of teaching versus their desire to maintain the old ways also provides a valuable understanding of the teaching innovation process (as cited in Karakhanian, 2011:120). The above arguments explain the importance and necessity of exploring teachers' awareness of the existing language teaching recommendations, their understanding of the theory and principles of CLT, as well as their their attitudes towards this method. The exploration of the existing challenges and certain factor effect on the overall situation was also deemed important in the present study.

7.1.2 Research Questions

The research questions that this chapter seeks to cover are the following:

1. Are English language teachers aware of the existence of the National Curriculum of Foreign Languages and its recommendations?
2. Do they comply with the existing official language teaching recommendations and standards in Georgia?
3. How well do the teachers understand the theoretical underpinnings of CLT?
4. What kind of attitudes do they hold towards CLT?
5. Are there any challenges that the teachers consider as obstacles to the successful application of CLT in Georgia?
6. Do school type and certain teacher characteristics affect the study results significantly?

7.2 METHODOLOGY[1]

7.2.1 Study design

A mixed-method approach was adopted to collect the data in the present study. This approach allows researchers to take advantage of different types of data, and provides a broader perspective to the study as the qualitative data helps describe aspects that the quantitative data cannot address (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). All the teacher-related data analyzed in this chapter was obtained through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (see Appendix 7.1) and questionnaires (see Appendix 7.3). Each method of information collection had certain advantages over the other, and together formed a comprehensive data collection tool.

[1] For the definitions of the statistical terms used in this as well as in all the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, see the Statistics Reference Page above. The terms are arra-nged according to the alphabetical order.

Research variables

The study presented in this chapter takes account of such factors as school type (environment) to which teachers belong, as well as other teacher-related variables – their age, sex, profession, academic qualifications, teacher training and teaching experience – to see in what ways these factors might affect the study results. Each of these variables will be looked at in this study.

Research medium and selection criteria

In the Georgian context, considerable differences are expected to be found with regard to the teaching situation at secondary schools depending on whether the school is private or public (sector), and whether it is located in the central or peripheral part of the capital, or beyond the capital, in a province of the country (location). Thus, having 'school type' as a differentiating variable in the analysis was considered relevant.

As far as school sector is concerned, whether a particular school is a public or a private institution is believed to be affecting administration, their decisions and requirements, as well as teachers and learners in different ways (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005:49). Hence, it was believed that arranging the schools according to the sector category they represent – private or public – was a useful distinction to make. In Georgia, private schools are widely believed to offer a better quality education: they are expensive compared with public schools, which are free in Georgia and are they are affordable only by those with a high income.

As for the location, according to Siniscalco and Auriat (2005), "[t]he location of a school is often a key issue in data collection because physical location is often strongly related to the socio-cultural environment of the school", and it thus might have some impact on the overall situation as well as teachers' and learners' attitudes. Two choices were made with regard to the variabl 'school location' in the present study. First, it was decided that the focus of the study would not go beyond the limits of the capital, as the language education situation in other regions is dramatically different from that in Tbilisi and a separate study investing- ating peculiarities related specifically to the provinces would be needed. A further reason why the capital alone was opted for is that by far the largest share of the population lives in Tbilisi, and consequently, the nation's highest number of schools (12.80%) is located there with the higher number of students (30%) than in any other Georgian city.[2]

[2] In all, there are 2,340 schools in Georgia, 2,085 of which are public and 255 private. In the capital, Tbilisi, there are 177 public and 124 private schools. The total number of pupils amounts to 570,372, of whom 518,467 are studying at public and 51,905 at private schools. There are 142,700 pupils at public schools and 28,183 at private schools in Tbilisi.
Retrieved from http://catalog.edu.ge/index.php?module=statistics. Also available at http://www. emis.ge (accessed January 2014).

Furthermore, the situation in each region of Georgia is rather different and cannot be considered to be representative of any other. Thus, it was believed that conducting research at one or two regions or cities and not in others would not yield accurate results from which general conclusions on a national level could be extrapolated in any meaningful way. Also, Tbilisi, being the capital of Georgia, is the place where any reform takes its origin and from where it starts its proliferation. Consequently, it is Tbilisi where the effect of reform would be felt most for the time being.

The second differentiation related to school 'location' that had to be made was classifying schools according to their central or peripheral location in Tbilisi. In Georgia, centrally-located schools (especially public schools) in each city are believed to be more prestigious, as the government tends to invest more financial resources and efforts in them as flagships of education policy and of society, and consequently, these schools have a better learning infrastructure and offer considerably enhanced social opportunities to their students, whereas schools in the periphery of the city are regarded as socially deprived and having poorer-quality equipment and even staff. There is less evidence that the same kind of difference can be found between centrally- and peripherally-located private schools.

Arising from these pre-determined school selection criteria, twelve secondary schools in total, representing a spread of school types in Tbilisi, were selected: four public and central (i.e., city-center); four public and peripheral (i.e., suburban); two private and central; and two private and peripheral (the map showing the school distribution according to their locations, can be found in Figure 1.4). The names of the schools participating in the study are not revealed for privacy reasons. The above information is summarized in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: The participating schools and the number of respondents per School: raw figures and percentage of the respondents per school type

School type	Number of responents	Percentage of respondents
Public Central	38	39.6%
Public Peripheral	24	25%
Private Central	17	17.7%
Private Peripheral	17	17.7%
Total	**96**	**100%**

The uneven balance of language teacher distribution across the private and public sectors can be explained by the fact that public schools in Georgia are normally far more numerous and have far more students enrolled than private schools, which are much fewer in number and smaller in scope. Consequently, the number of students at private secondary schools in Georgia is generally

speaking much smaller, and accordingly, the number of language teachers needed to represent that category sufficiently is likewise smaller. Also, the access to the public schools was more easily obtained than to the private schools, where, in some cases, the administration was reluctant to cooperate, claiming that the study would interfere with the school's academic activities.

7.2.2 Study participants

The 121 participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. Of those 96 who completed and returned the questionnaires, 26 were also observed in class, and out of these 26 teachers, 21 were also interviewed (see Section 7.2.3 – *The interviews).* This allowed a full picture to be drawn of some of the participating teachers' – their informedness about and understanding of the existing methodology requirements (through the interviews), their attitudes towards CLT (through questionnaires), and their actual teaching practice (through lesson observations, see Chapter 9).

Participant characteristics

The following teacher-related characteristics were explored in the present study: age, sex, teaching experience, specialization, academic background, teaching experience, teacher training. Some of them have been included in the study as a variable, some of them have been dropped for the reasons provided in the paragraph below.

As the frequency analysis of the participants' age revealed the majority of the respondents belonged to the 35–45 age group, followed by the second largest group of participant belonging to the 45–55 age group and the fewest number of respondents to 25-35 age category. A further ANOVA test showed, overall, private school representatives tend to be significantly younger (M=39) than their public school colleagues (M=43) – $F (3, 92) = 10.14$, $p.=.027$.

As for sex, an interesting fact to be noted here is that for the entirety of the study, out of the 96 participants, fully 95 were female and only a single one was male, a fact which throws into stark relief how dominated the language teaching profession in Georgia is by female instructors. It should also be mentioned that all the participants were Georgians, except for one American teacher, a participant of the Teach & Learn with Georgia program (see Section 5.4.4) who was interviewed only to get his perspective on the English language teaching situation at the school where he acted as a teacher's assistant (see also Section 9.3). Thus, neither sex nor nationality was included as as independent variables in the study.

As for the participating teachers' teaching experience, it ranged from under 5 to over 20 years: the majority (38%), had over 10 years of experience, 33% over 5, 18% of teachers over 20 and 9% of participants had under 5 years

of language teaching experience. A statistically significant difference was detected between the length of the teaching experience of teachers at public (M=3.06)[3] and private (M=1.94) schools [$t(95)=7.39$, $p=.000$], the public school teachers tending to have a significantly longer background in teaching than those from the private sector.

The participants had academic qualifications in pedagogy (52%) and in philology (48%), the majority of them (66%) holding the degrees equivalent to BA (four to five years of undergraduate studies) and the rest (33%) MA degrees (one to two years of graduate studies).The participants were also asked about their teacher training experience. Since all 96 participants turned out to have undergone some teacher training, this variable was also dismissed as having no effect on the research outcomes. More careful analysis of the quality and the origin of the training provider (local or international) may be a subject of further research and analysis. The participating teacher data discussed above is further summarized in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Parcipicating teachers' background information

Grouping criteria	Groups	Number of cases (N=21)
Age group	25-35	4
	35-45	5
	45-55 (and above)	12
Sex	Female	20
	Male	1
Teaching experience	Under 5 years	2
	Over 5 years	10
	Over 10 years	2
	Over 20 years	7
Specialisation	Pedagogy	11
	Philology	10
Academic degree	BA	12
	MA	9
Teacher training	All the teachers	21

[3] The mean scores for Teaching Experience have been given the following values: 1=under five years of experience; 2=over five; 3=over ten; and 4=over twenty.

Incentives to participate

Permission from both the Ministry of Education and the individual school administrations was first obtained before approaching the schoolteachers. Teachers were asked to participate on the basis that they would thereby be contributing to research related to the aim of making foreign language teaching in Georgia more modern and compatible with the communicative needs of the present day. All teachers who participated did so voluntarily, and the completion and return of the questionnaires constituted their consent to participate in the study. The questionnaire collection and the interviews were completed without any complaints being reported or adverse events having occurred. As reported above (see Section 7.2.1), public school administrations were more cooperative than those from private school. The guarantee that the information obtained would be treated confidentially was provided to the school administrations, as well as the participating teachers.

7.2.3 Data collection tools

The interviews

The interviews were conducted in an attempt to gain more comprehensive insights into the participants' awareness of the official language teaching recommendations, teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, as well as their attitudes towards CLT and the assessment of the challenges related to the implementation of this method in Georgia.

There are a number of advantages to the interview format, which are discussed in the research methodology literature. According to Mangubhai, the use of a questionnaire inviting teachers to respond to a pre-designed, limited set of statements does not allow teachers to provide personal interpretations or to use their own language and constructs for communicating their understanding of the subject (2005:34). McBride and Schostak (2004) explain the usefulness of using interviews as a data collection tool, stating that interviews tend to provide more meaningful, qualitative data (2004:2), whereas questionnaires simply give respondents a chance to make a choice among the limited options provided. According to Patton (1990), interviews are suitable for "uncovering people's real perceptions, assumptions, pre-judgments, presuppositions" (1990:278). One more advantage of adopting the interview for qualitative data collection is that it offers the opportunity of having a more informal, dynamic conversation, which also gives an interviewer an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and obtain more "elaborate" explanations, whereas questionnaires and surveys are more static and might not provide that degree of flexibility and in-depth information (Van Meurs, 2010:132).

The interviews in this study took the form of 13 open-ended questions and lasted for about twenty-minutes each. 21 teachers were interviewed at

twelve secondary school in Tbilisi, Georgia (see the interview form in Appendix 7.1).

The Questionnaires

The questionnaires were aimed at finding out to what extent secondary school English language teachers in Tbilisi are in favor of and supportive of Communicative Language Teaching, as well as to supplement, cross-check and provide an additional perspective to the data obtained through the interviews about the teachers' understanding of the theoretical basis of CLT and their evaluation of the challenges associated with this teaching approach.

To make sure that a full list of attributes of CLT criteria and all of its principles were covered, the literature dealing with the theoretical underpinnings of this approach (was carefully examined (see Chapter 3). The most typical and most common features of CLT were identified from the works of various authors Widdowson, 1978; Littlewood, 1981; Freeman-Larsen, 2000; Richards & Rogers, 2001; Widdowson, 2004; Richards, 2006; Brandl, 2007), and were included in the questionnaire. Besides pro-CLT statements, the respondents were also prompted to reveal their attitudes towards non-CLT items. The questionnaire items were classified into seven thematic groups, which was thought useful for facilitating its processing and analysis: (1) Language and Learning Theory, (2) Course and Syllabus Design, (3) Teachers' and Learners' Roles, (4) Classroom Interaction, (5) Error Correction, (6) Teaching Material and Activities, and (7) Challenges and Difficulties associated with CLT (see appendix 7.3).

Group 1, Language Learning Theory, looks at the learning and language theories underlying CLT, such as more importance of focusing on language meaning than its form, paying more attention to fluency than to accuracy, taking an inductive rather than a deductive approach of teaching, and the importance of the target language use in the lesson. Group 2, Course and Syllabus Design, is concerned with language skills and a function-oriented syllabus focusing on real life skills development in learners. Group 3, Teachers' and Learners' Roles, explores CLT-compatible teacher and learner roles. Group 4, Classroom Interaction, looks at the classroom interaction patterns, such as pair/group work activities, student-centerdness and increased student participation and talking time. Group 5, Error Correction, focuses on the application of CLT-compatible error correction techniques, such as self-correction, peer correction and a delayed feedback. Group 6, Teaching Material and Activities, explores the communicative nature of the teaching materials and activities applied, and Group 7, Challenges and Difficulties associated with CLT, outlines the challenges that can potentially be related to CLT implementation in the classroom. For a more refined analysis, Group 7 was further

subdivided into teacher-related challenges, learner-related challenges, and other challenges categories.

Design

Initially, the questionnaire comprised 85 items, which, after pilot testing, Factor Analysis and revision was reduced to 60 items. The largest part of the teacher questionnaire took the form of statements about CLT presented as 5-point Likert-format items. The teachers had to indicate, on a five-point scale, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the given statements. The values of the rating scale numbers were defined as follows: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=have a neutral position, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree.

Opinions differ with regard to whether a neutral position, in this case option 3, should be included as a possible choice to respondents or not. According to Burns and Grove (1997), if this choice is made unavailable, respondents are forced to make a choice one way or the other on what their view is, "which may lead to irritation in respondents and may increase non-response bias" (cited in Rattray & Jones, 2007:236). In the present study, adopting a neutral position is an option which gives the teachers a chance to express that their attitude is genuinely undecided or uncertain, where that is applicable. Another pair of problems associated with surveys using a questionnaire with Likert items are the issues of what is known as a 'central tendency bias', which means that respondents may avoid using the extremes in response categories offered and a 'social desirability bias', by which respondents might try to portray themselves or their organization in a positive way. These are potential problems and need to be taken into consideration (Armstrong, 1987:359-362; Allen & Seaman, 2007: 65-64).

Even though most of the questionnaire statements were offered in a Likert format, there is one section in the questionnaire that takes a different form, the one comprising items 13–20. These items check teachers' understanding of what constitutes real practice in language skills development.More specifically, items 13–20 verify if teachers understand correctly whether certain types of activities really develop a given language skill (reading, listening, speaking or writing) or not. Teachers were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale (4=helps greatly; 3=helps; 2=helps to some extent; 1=does not help much; 0=does not help at all) the extent to which they believe if the language activities described help learners develop the indicated language skill (for the full version of the questionnaire, see Appendix 7.3). This proved to be quite useful, as throughout the lesson observations and the interviews, it was noticed that quite often teachers, as well as learners, held misconceptions about what the aim of a certain language activity performed in the class was. For example, very often in a lesson, it was observed that learners were reading out grammar exercises, and later on, when asked in the interview whether they had

had any speaking practice in the lesson, some of the students and teachers answered that they had, mistaking the mechanical grammar exercise reading for a speaking activity.

To assure that all the teachers understood the statements as accurately as possible (as teachers' language proficiency problems were anticipated), and to avoid any misunderstandings, the questionnaires were presented to the participants in Georgian, and only later were they translated into English for the present dissertation (See Appendix 7.3b).

To enable a comparison of data derived from different sources (teachers, learners and observers), it was attempted to keep the structure and contents of all three data collection tools used in the present study, such as teacher and learner' questionnaires as well as observation forms used in the third study (Chapter 9; see Appendix 9.1), as consistent with one another as possible. Even though a high degree of uniformity was achieved, certain differences are still present in the forms, due to the different formats and circumstances of data collection in each case. For example, the statements included in the teacher questionnaire, such as "The examination system, which focuses of testing learners' knowledge of language forms, negatively affects teacher/learner motivation to use CLT", could not be included in the observation form, as the statement refers to the kind of practice that could not be evaluated during the observations. Similarly, in the learner questionnaires the statements were transformed from the teachers' into learners' perspective, and again, some of the statements that no longer pertained to this context had to be dropped.

7.2.4 The data collection procedure and obtained material

The whole study was conducted in September 2011, at the beginning of the academic year 2011–2012, within the space of a month. At all the participating schools administrators facilitated the process of setting up interviews ans helped distribute and collect the questionnaires.

The interviews

In order to make the necessary amendments to the interview structure and questions, before the actual interviews took place, a pilot interview was conducted with a number of volunteer English language teachers to practice the procedure and to receive interviewee feedback. As a result, four interview questions were dropped, and some of the interview questions were reformulated to stimulate more focused answers. The fact that the interviews were conducted after the observations, this provided a good chance to compare what had actually been observed in the lesson with what teachers said about their teaching experiences and to check their awareness of the language

teaching recommendations and understanding of the theoretical basisi of CLT. During the interviews follow-up, unplanned questions, which had arisen from the lesson observations, were also asked. All the interviews were audio-recorded and summarized for the qualitative analysis (see the Interview data analysis form in Appendix7.2).

The questionnaires

The teacher questionnaires were quite extensive (60 items). The questionnaire was first piloted with four teachers of various ages and backgrounds (age range 32–60: a university professor, a private-school teacher of English, a public-school teacher of German, and a private language center teacher of English). After the teachers had completed the questionnaires, their comments and suggestions were discussed, and some refinements and alterations were introduced into the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were distributed to all the available English language teachers at the schools visited. It took about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire, so the teachers were asked to do the task at home. Most of the questionnaires distributed were returned completed (121 distributed, 96 collected) on another day.

7.2.5. Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis: interview results

The method used in analyzing the interview data followed the analytical approach of the qualitative study. For the presentation of the results, the views expressed by the 21 English language teachers were summarized with the help of a specially-designed form (see Appendix 7.2). Patterns were identified in the retrieved data and all the recurring themes in the interviews were highlighted and categorized for analysis purposes. The interview analysis section deals with the first three research questions of this study.

As Patton (1990:169) suggests, qualitative research provides a more "in-depth" perspective and "illuminates" the questions studied in a more meaningful way. For this purpose, in the present study, some particularly noteworthy quotations from the individual interviews will be cited to support the points made by the teachers and provide an opportunity for the reader to be directly exposed to the thoughts and ideas expressed by the participants on this topic. To preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, the sources of the quotations will be coded with a letter "T", which stands for "teacher", and a number unique to the respondent. Codes will be used to refer to the school type teachers represent – Pub. C. (Public Central); Pub. P. (Public Peripheral); Pri. P. (Private Peripheral); and Pri. C. (Private Central) – so, for example, the code T01: Pub. P. refers to a certain teacher representing a public school in the

periphery of Tbilisi. To better illustrate and corroborate the points made, some figures and statistics will be provided along with the qualitative data. For this purpose, descriptive statistics tests, as well as frequency counts and Chi-Square analysis, were performed on various sets of the qualitative data. The interviews were conducted in Georgian and were translated into English as closely to the original as possible by me.

As it can be observed from the description of the data analysis approach earlier in this section, the approach adopted in this and subsequent studies is univariate. This can be explained by the exploratory nature of the present investigation, which primarily aims at describing the situation in the field of English language teaching in Georgia in general terms. The descriptive statistics, together with the qualitative data obtained during the studies, provide all the information and allow the reader to form an accurate picture of the situation. However, through this approach inter-variable associations are not taken into account and may affect the interpretation of the data. To avoid inaccuracies of interpretation, it was further checked whether multivariate analyses, using linear regression models as well as a multivariate model of ANOVA, would have yielded different results from the ones currently obtained, which, in the vast majority of cases, did not prove to be the case. For example, in certain cases (with the 'teacher age' [Chapter 7] and 'extracurricular language learning' [Chapter 10] factors), where multiple groups were formed under the factors investigated, the population size ended up to be small in certain groups. This in the case of a multivariate analysis approach led to the results being less compatible with the raw data, as well as qualitative data results, than the adopted univariate analyses did.

Inter-rater reliability

To check the validity of the interview response summaries and the categorizations of the responses, as well as of the translations undertaken, peer debriefing techniques were applied (Morse et al., 2002). The outcomes of the categorization and the summaries were shared with two colleagues with equal knowledge of the field of language teaching. A large degree of agreement was achieved for most of the items. In some cases, where certain clarifications were needed for better understanding of the categorizations, explanations were provided, which were deemed satisfactory by the co-evaluators. Using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 (SPPS Inc., 2011), an inter-rater reliability of .89 (Cohen's Kappa) was calculated.

Quantitative data analysis: questionnaire processing and coding

All the data from the teacher's questionnaire was entered into SPSS. All the variables (school type, age, sex, teacher training, academic degree, teaching experience) were coded numerically in order to make more statistical calculation options possible in SPSS format. The participating schools were coded in four different ways: (a) individually (1- 12); (b) according to location as well as the sector (Public Central, Public Peripheral, Private Central, Private Peripheral); (c) according to location only (central versus peripheral); (d) according to sector only (private versus public). Different categorizations were made, starting with individual schools before grouping them into broader categories. This was done to check at which level and in which component of the study the statistically significant effect of 'school type' as a variable might lie.

The questionnaire was analyzed in three separate sections: items 13-20, which are meant to measure Georgian teachers' understanding and their ability to differentiate between skills-oriented and language form development-oriented activities; the 'Challenges' section (items 47-60), which lists typical CLT-related difficulties and invites the respondents to mark to what extent these difficulties might be specific to the Georgian context; and the rest of the items of the questionnaire, which investigate the teachers' general attitudes towards CLT.

Data reduction and calculating averages

Initially, to detect the underlying, unobserved commonalities among the multiple items on the questionnaire, as well as to reduce the number of variables, a Factor Analysis of principal components with Varimax rotation was performed on the teacher questionnaire items. The data were analyzed using SPSS. This step was considered necessary because it is often asserted that the structure of the construct being measured should first be understood before its meaning can properly be tested (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). However, as a result of the Factor Analysis, the factors yielded (12 new factors, dealing with both CLT and non-CLT concepts) were unnecessarily complicated and distorted the straightforward approach that was considered most appropriate for the present study. Consequently, for the data reduction, it was decided instead to calculate the averages for each questionnaire thematic group.

For all groups of the questionnaire (see Section 7.2.3: *Questionnaires*) – except for the 'Challenges' group, with regard of which it was considered worthwhile to look at each item dealing with a concrete CLT-related issue separately – the composite scores were calculated. This resulted in six dependent variables in total, dealing with CLT principles, plus the seventh

group of 16 items/dependent variables, dealing with the CLT-related challenges.

Before computing the composite scores for each group, it was checked that all the items had been measured in the same way and had the same directionality (the higher the score on a scale, the more CLT-oriented a teacher was). In some cases, when the items were asking about a non-CLT characteristic and thus had the opposite directionality (items 2, 5, 9, 12, 24, 26, 32, 34 and 38), they were reverse-coded in SPSS.

Validity and Reliability

Before running any other tests to further explore the data obtained through the questionnaires, the internal consistency analysis of the questionnaire items was conducted in SPSS. As a result, Cronbach's Alpha of .838 was estimated, which indicates a strong reliability coefficient for the itmes of the questionnaire used in the study.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

The next step that was taken for my data analysis was carrying out descriptive statistics tests, calculating frequencies, means and standards deviations, to reveal the general tendencies in the data. The effects of the independent variables of the study on the analysis outcomes were checked by adopting inferential statistics. The effects of the independent factors were explored by using the inferential statitistics tests – an Independent-Samples T-test and an ANOVA. As normality of data (checked with a Shapiro-Wilks test) underlying ANOVA were not quite met, an adjusted F test, namely, the Brown-Forsythe statistic, which is more robust to such violations, had to be used in SPSS. To detect where exactly the inter-group difference lay, follow-up post-hoc analysis tests were applied. Again, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not satisfied (Equal Variances Not Assumed), the more robust Tamhane's T2 test was used instead of the common alternatives of Bonferroni or Scheffe, which could have been applied if equal variances had been assumed.

To analyze the relationship between the variables and to determine the correlation between the various aspects of CLT and the teachers' attitudes towards each of them (do teachers who score highly on certain groups of the questionnaire, also score highly on certain other groups?), a correlation test was performed. A significance level of .05 was set for all statistical tests.

7.3 STUDY RESULTS

7.3.1 Interview results

The results reported in this section are mainly of a qualitative nature and are based on the information retrieved through the interviews conducted at 12 schools with 21 English language teachers. As mentioned above, some quantitative data will be presented as well for the more precision. I will discuss the results according to the different research questions studied.

Research Question 1: *Are English language teachers aware of the existence of the National Curriculum of Foreign Languages and its recommendations?*

To answer the first research question, open-ended interview question number 1 and 2 were asked to the participating teachers: "Is there any document provided by the Ministry of Education which defines the methodology and standards that need to be followed in the language classroom?(1)/Are you aware of the foreign language teaching methodology recommendations and the teaching/learning goals that the document provides? (2).

The interview questions were aimed at revealing the extent to which the teachers were informed about the language policy document in force in Georgia, namely, The National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL). Some samples of the teachers' interviews are presented below to illustrate the categories formed in this regard.

Table 7.3: Teacher interviewees' answers to the interview questions regarding their awareness of the official language teaching requirements in Georgia

Category	Examples
Well aware	*"Absolutely, at the beginning of the year, we sit down and discuss together how to stick to that, which course book to choose, so that we can follow the requirements and achieve the language goals by the end of the year"* (T10: Pub. C.).
Partly aware	*"Yes, I know something about that, but really very little; I do not know the details"* (T04: Pub. P)
Not aware	*"I have no idea what document you are referring to, we have not been informed about or provided with such a document by anybody"* (T05: Pub. P)

The statistics of the degree of informedness among the teachers of Englsh of the language teaching requirements are presented in the table below:

Table 7.4: Frequencies and percentages of the English language teachers' awareness level of the official language curriculum in Georgia

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Not aware	4	19.0
Partly aware	15	71.4
Well aware	2	9.5
Total	21	100

To compare the mean scores for the teachers' awareness across the school types in order to find out whether the situation in this regard varied at different schools in Tbilisi, Georgia, an ANOVA was performed. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 7.5: English language teachers' awareness of the official language curriculum in Georgia across different school types

School Types	Mean	SD	N
Public Central	2.14	.378	7
Public Peripheral	1.33	.516	6
Private Central	2.25	.500	4
Private Peripheral	2.00	.000	4
Total	1.90	.539	21

Note: SD=Standard Deviation

As a result of a follow-up post-hoc analysis, a significant difference was found only with regard to the Public Peripheral school type, where the teachers' awareness level regarding the existing Language Standards in Georgia was lowest. The effect of this school type in this case was estimated at $F(3, 18)=7{,}467$, $p.=.002$. Other school type representatives demonstrated the same level of awareness.

Research Question 2: *Do teachers comply with the existing official language teaching recommendations in Georgia?*

To obtain an answer to the second research question of the present study, the teachers' responses to the interview question number three were analyzed: "How closely do you follow the official recommendations provided in the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages? If not, what do you use as your methodology guideline instead?". Some samples of the teachers' interviews are presented below to illustrate the categories formed in this regard.

Table 7.6: Interviewees' answers illustrating the level of their compliance with the recommendations of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages

Category	Examples
Full compliance	*"Yes, we take it seriously. We discuss ways to meet the Standards in a special meeting which we call at the beginning of the year" (T10: Pub. C.).*
Partial compliance	*"We try to take the National Curriculum requirements into account. In our final examinations we try to use the rubrics provided in the Language Standards published by the Ministry of Education and design our tests accordingly. However, during the year, we mostly focus on our course books and the method that they offer" (T02: Pri. C.).*
No compliance	*"I do not follow the Language Standard recommendations; that is a mere formality. I have my own method, which I developed using the experience I have in dealing with pupils and their language needs" (T05:Pub. P).*

The statistics of the degree of compliance of the teachers of English with the language teaching requirements in Georgia are presented in the table below:

7.7: English language teachers' compliance level with the NCFL recommendation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Do not comply	5	23.8
Partly comply	15	71.4
Fully comply	1	4.8
Total	21	100

The data revealed through this analysis is in line with the earlier research conducted in this area in Georgia by Tkemaladze et al. in 2001 (2001: 112), which shows low level of compliance with the existing official language teaching requirements. The quest into the effect of the independent variables on the teachers' language policy compliance results revealed no significant differences.

Research Question 3: *How well do the teachers understand the theoretical underpinnings of Communicative Language Teaching?*

Interview question number four – "How would you describe CLT, its main principles, goals and procedures?" – as well as number five – "How would you interpret the concept of Communicative Competence?", together with the information obtained through other questions that followed, helped obtain the answer to the third research question relating to teachers' understanding level of CLT's underpinnings. Som illustrative samples of the teachers' interview answers, illustrating how the categories were formed, are presented below.

Table 7.8: Teachers' responses illustrating the level of their understanding of CLT underpinnings

Category	Examples
Has no understanding	*"I have no idea what you mean by 'Communicative Language Teaching'. Maybe I know, but I cannot remember"* (T07: Pub.P).
Has partial understanding	*"I've heard of the method, but have little knowledge of what it is about. I think it aims to develop communication – to enable learners to speak* (T05: Pub. P).
Has full understanding	*"CLT aims at English use, as well as all four skills development. In CLT the grammar role is reduced and integrated with other skills and activities work. However, it is still important to teach grammar as well" (*T02: Pri. C).

The statistical information about the degree of understanding of CLT underpinnings on Georgian teachers' part are presented in the table below:

Table 7.9: The 21 Georgian language teachers' theoretical understanding of CLT (based on Karakhanian 2011)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Has no understanding	8	38.1
Has partial understanding	11	52.2
Has full understanding	2	9.5
Total	21	100

As it can be observed from the table above, the range from to absolutely no theoretical understanding to partial understanding of CLT was revealed among the teachers in the majority of cases. The interviews showed quite a few

teachers (8), mainly at Public Peripheral schools, who demonstrated very limited or no know-ledge about CLT at all; it was also straightforwardly stated by the overwhelming majority of the respondents (19 out of 21) involved in the study that they had no or very little familiarity with the literature dealing with CLT. The cases of partial understanding or misunderstanding also abounded (11). There were only two cases when the teachers demonstrated close to accurate understanding of CLT: both belonged to the Private Central school type.

As the biggest group comprises teachers that were ignorant of CLT, it was deemed interesting and enlightening to discuss some the cases of other types of language theory related instances. Fore example, there were cases of the teachers' evident confusion about what the language skills are: mistaking "grammar" for a skill, for example ("*My main focus is covering all four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and grammar")*, as well as mistaking a teaching method for a skill, or even for a stage of an activity ("*I use all teaching methods – listening method, reading method, post-reading, pre-reading*"). Also, misunderstanding was demonstrated not only at a theoretical, but also at a linguistic level: there was one case when a teacher, having described her teaching approach as "communicative" and while describing the typical activities that are conducted in her class, mentioned taking her learners on guided excursions, where learners can use their English for real communication, and added that these types of activities were suggested in the Teacher's Book *(English World 2*[4]) and referred to as "guided lessons". Obviously, there was a misunderstanding on her part regarding what exactly was meant by "guided lessons" in the book (a "guided lesson" refers to a type of lesson where a teacher guides and gives direction to the lesson/activity without much interference, rather than dominating the whole teaching process) and she interpreted the phrase according to its primary dictionary definition: *Guided* – adj. 1. Conducted by a guide: *A guided tour of the castle* (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary,* 2008). The reason for such misinterpretation must have been the teacher's inadequate English. This example also illustrates a lack of understanding on the teachers' part of the effects and outcomes certain teaching activities entail, since having guided tours within Georgia for foreign-language proficiency purposes seems not very effective.

It was considered interesting to investigate to what extent the teachers' knowledge and understanding of CLT underpinnings differed across the various school types. Accordingly, an ANOVA statistical test was performed to reveal the effect significance, which was estimated at $F(3, 18) = 5.52$; a statistically significant difference was detected between the Private Central school and the Public school types (Public Central and Public Peripheral

[4] Macmillan Publishers: see at http://www.macmillanenglish.com/younglearners/englishworld (accessed November 2013).

school), the significance being estimated at *p.*=.025 (Public Central) and *p.*=.006 (Public Peripheral). No effect on the results of the other independent variables (see 7.2.1) was revealed as a result of a further ANOVA application.

It is interesting to note as well that when asked to talk about their own teaching practice (Interview questions 6-12) many of the teachers (12 out of 21), while evaluating the communicative character of their own teaching, reported using a "mixed approach" – communicative as well as grammar-oriented, or even admitted employing several methods at a time:

> *Well, the methodologies are mixed: we use communicative as well as grammar-focused methods – basically, we are trained to implement the methodologies presented in the course books, and the course books offer a variety of approaches (T11: Pri. P*).

The above text also reveals another case of low awareness of what the teaching methodology implies: a course book cannot be based on several distinct teaching methodology premises simultaneously; however, course books do offer a wide range of teaching activities, covering language skills as well as grammar, vocabulary and phonology. It seems that the teachers' perceptions and understandings in most cases stop at the surface of the specific activities and exercises the course book offers, which are often erroneously referred to as "teaching methods" by the language instructors in Georgia.

Having explored the teachers' language policy awareness, the level of their declared compliance with the official teaching recommendations and their understanding of the theoretical base of CLT, now I will turn to discovering what factors and challenges might be preventing the teachers from applying CLT in their everyday teaching practice (research question 5, which will be dealt again below while discussing the questionnaire data obtained in this regard; research question 4 will be deal with later, as it was through the questionnaire, not the interview data, that the answer to this question was attempted to be obtained).

Research Question 5: *Are there any challenges that the teachers consider as obstacles to the successful application of Communicative Language Teaching?*

The teacher responses to the interview question thirteen – "What difficulties do you encounter in the process of Communicative Language Teaching?" – yielded much data which helped answer the above research question about the difficulties related to CLT implementation in the lesson. Unlike in the case of the Challenges section of the questionnaire, where respondents were invited to indicate how much, on a scale of 1 to 5, they saw a certain CLT-related issue as a problem in their own teaching, during the interviews, the participants were not given a list of difficulties to choose from; rather, they were asked to come up with their own spontaneous answers.

A table with a pre-defined list of typical challenges was designed for the purpose of the analysis. As is often done in the literature dealing with CLT-related challenges (Li, 1998:685), the difficulties were further categorized into four groups: (a) teacher-related; (b) learner-related; (c) administration-related and (d) CLT-related. The number of times these difficulties were mentioned by the participating teachers in the interviews were counted and are reported in Table 7.10 below. Even though some other, general teaching challenges were also discussed in the interviews, only those difficulties that have to do with the application of CLT in the Georgian classroom are presented in the table below.

Table 7.10: Common CLT-related difficulties and the Georgian teachers' acknowledgement of these challenges realted to their context

Source of difficulty	Number of times
A. Teacher-related	
1. Low language proficiency makes it difficult for teachers to practice CLT	4
2. The influence of older methods makes it difficult to practice CLT	2
3. Teachers need to have better theoretical understanding of CLT	4
4. The fear of using a novel method	10
Mean	**5.0**
B. Learner-related	
1. Learners are given too much independence in the learning process	0
2. It is difficult to involve all learners in the communicative learning process	11
3. It is difficult to make learners speak in the target foreign language	2
4. Mixed level learner groups are difficult to deal with in a CLT lesson	9
Mean	**5.5**
C. Administration-related	
1. There are not enough methodology training courses in CLT	10
2. There are not enough teaching resources and infrastructure for CLT application	17
3. Large classes make the application of CLT difficult	16
4. There is little time allocated for covering a CLT course	9
5. Grammar-driven examination system has a negative effect on CLT application	1
Mean	**10.6**
D. CLT-related	
1. CLT takes much preparation time	6
2. CLT is related with many classroom management problems	17
3. Assessment of learners' communicative competence is a challenge	0
Mean	**7.6**

As can be seen from the table, difficulties falling into the category related to the school administration or to the education system were mentioned most often, except for item C5, which was mentioned as an issue in the interviews only once. Teacher-related difficulties tend to be seen as the least problematic by English language teachers in Georgia. Below follows a more detailed analysis of the interview data relating to CLT-associated difficulties.

Teacher-related difficulties

As shown in Table 7.10 above, most of the participating teachers were not very willing to talk about the difficulties related to their own status which might be preventing them from efficient language teaching, thereby making them accountable for the failure. Only a few (four) teachers admitted any need for a higher level of language proficiency on their part, or were explicit about the lingering influence of traditional teaching methods on their current practices. Some examples of teachers' discussion about the challenges their encounter in the process of teaching follow below.

> *We need to be exposed to native speech more, to have a better pronunciation and use appropriate, natural English (T08: Pub. P).*

> *We are used to the old methods, the activities that they offered. Now the course books have been changed. Everything is new — the approach is new, the materials are new –*
> *so we will have to learn much, and adapt ourselves (T06: Pub. C).*

Overall, there was no nostalgia or urge reported by teachers to carry on with the grammar-driven ways of language teaching. There was even some discussion of how unpopular grammar-focused lessons are among learners and how the teachers, who think that grammar is one of the most important components of language teaching, have to find ways to deliver a grammar lesson in disguise, which is already going to extremes, as CLT does not exclude grammar instruction at all.

> *The learners do not want to learn grammar any more. They are demanding a "language without grammar" approach. So, when I have a grammar lesson, I do not even mention the grammatical topic we are going to cover in the lesson, rather I hide it under another name; for example, if I want to teach Present Perfect, I say, we are planning to discuss our life experiences* (T02: Pri. C.).

This kind of attitude on the part of teachers, as well as learners, is not typical of every country (Li, 1998). Even in some of the neighboring countries, the situation varies dramatically – in Armenia, for example, nostalgia towards past teaching and learning experiences and educational traditions have a strong hold on the parties involved in the education process, who, in some cases, openly show their preference for more traditional, Soviet teaching practices (Karakhanyan, 2011: 65, 85).

Another teacher-related problem listed in the CLT literature is the teachers' fear of having to apply a novel methodology and having to experiment with it. Almost half (ten teachers) of the group interviewed

admitted facing this challenge. Some of the teachers also confessed a need for help in this respect. The above said is illustrated by the quote that follows:

> *It can be quite daunting to use novel approaches and methodologies in teaching. Application of technology tools, for example, in the language teaching, helps to make the teaching more communicative; however, it can be quite challenging for teachers to start integrating that into their everyday practice; learners are much better at it (T12: Pri. P.).*

Learner-related difficulties

The analysis conducted in the present study revealed that the increased independence delegated to the learner when CLT is applied is not actually perceived as a problem among the Georgian teachers, as is the case in some other countries (see Section 3.9.5). Students' mixed language proficiency level was mentioned as problematic by half of the interviewees. Teachers reported a feeling of being left helplessly alone in facing this problem:

> *There are recommendations that teachers need to adapt materials according to each learner's needs and abilities, but this is easier said than done — in a classroom with 32 learners it is virtually impossible, I must admit* (T08: Pub. P.).

In the CLT classroom, level differences were considered as giving rise to another problem – a difficulty in equally involving all learners in the communicative learning process:

> *Learners with higher levels of proficiency speak out more, and the ones who can't speak well sit silently; they do not want to look silly in front of their peers (T09: Pub. P).*

CLT was believed to be detrimental to more outgoing, more sociable personalities of the learner, as well as of supporting largely the needs of higher-level students. Making students speak in the target foreign language was not, however, reported as problematic by the teachers.

Administration-related difficulties

Even though almost all the respondents reported that they had participated in teacher training courses on new methods, some of them still mentioned a lack of teacher training and of professional support as something they are suffering from in this transitional period. Some of them expressed their dissatisfaction at the fact that courses typically provide only superficial and fragmented knowledge, whereas what they require is more theoretical background and a deeper understanding.

> *In our training courses, there is no theoretical background provided to things. We are shown how to conduct certain activities, and then we have to find our way in our classrooms on our own* (T06: Pub.C).

Three of the teachers reported having attended training courses which were not useful at all, as the contents had offered nothing new to them:

> *We have training courses, all of us, we have to have training. The Ministry sets it as a requirement, and they organize them for us. The courses are interesting, but they are for new teachers mainly; we know most of the stuff they teach* (T07: Pub. P).

The biggest challenges reported by the teachers were those of teaching resources and large class sizes. Almost all the respondents referred to large classes as one of the principal constraints on their attempts to use CLT. In Georgia, there are often about 30-35 students in a group at secondary public schools, whereas the numbers at private secondary schools may range between 15 and 20. Despite the difference in this respect between the public and private school system, these problems were mentioned by both public and private sector teachers. The teachers found it very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to use CLT with so many students in one class, as, according to many of them, CLT requires close monitoring and giving individual attention, while the speaking activities often require classroom rearrangement, which results in much noise:

> *I must admit, I sometimes skip pair and group work activities, as with so many students I can't set it up properly. I find it difficult to pay attention to each group/pair as well. Well, it can be noisy too* (T11: Pri. P).

Seven teachers complained about not having the resources in place needed for the successful implementation of CLT:

> *Zero resources… one Teacher's Book to every three teachers; we find it very difficult to share. No CD players or anything (T09: Pub. P).*

> *There is no technical equipment at all – no DVD players, whiteboards, or any other facilities – it is all left up to the teacher* (T04: Pub. P).

The language lab, which is reminiscent of the Audio-Lingual teaching method popular in the 1970s in the former Soviet Union was mentioned by six teachers as a very useful resource for achieving communicative teaching goals, especially for listening skills and pronunciation improvement.

Little time being dedicated to covering the communicative syllabus, which entails much more time-consuming activities than the previous style of grammar-focused exercises did, also came up as an issue in quite a few cases (nine teachers). It is important to note that the grammar-driven examination

system was mentioned by only one teacher as a detrimental factor for CLT implementation.

CLT-related difficulties

Typical difficulties associated with CLT itself include the time-consuming character of CLT activities, classroom management issues, and CLT assessment-related difficulties. Only CLT-related classroom management challenges were referred to in the vast majority of cases (17 teachers); a lack of time for implementing CLT activities was not often mentioned as a problem (six teachers); whereas assessment-related difficulties, which are discussed in the CLT literature rather often, were not brought up in the interviews by any of the teachers.

A particularly positive attitude towards CLT, and an acknowledgement of there being very few challenges, was demonstrated by three of the interviewees. It is interesting to note that these were the heads of the language departments in their respective schools:

> *Overall, we have excellent results; there are some "weak students", of course, but as a whole, we have good results. Well, difficulties… there are some, but nothing too serious (T06: Pub. C.).*

A distancing of their own practical attitudes from those of the rest of the language teaching staff was also observed among these teachers:

> *Well, there is no problem of resources, I have my own CD player; whoever does not have one can go to the staff room and use the computer there to do the listening … nothing is impossible or difficult if the teacher is hard-working and motivated (T04: Pub. P).*

To check how the situation varies across the different school types, a cross-tabulation was performed. Chi-Square analysis was used to compare the frequencies of mentions of CLT-related challenges. The results indicate that there is no significantly different situation in this respect across the different school types ($\chi 2$ (Df =3, N =21) =2, 26 - 20.1, p value ranging from < .107 to 759).

7.3.2 Questionnaire results

The results reported in this section are of a quantitative nature and are based on the questionnaire data output, which are meant to provide answers to the research questions 4 and 5, and 6, as well as to supplement the research questions 2 and 4.

Research Question 4: *What kind of attitudes do teachers of English hold towards CLT?*

The data presented in Table 7.11 provides an overview of the teacher attitudes across the various CLT-related areas, and summarizes the detailed discussion that follows afterwards (for more information about the methodology and raw data processing procedure, see Setion 7.2.5).[5]

Table 7.11: Teachers' attitudes towards various aspects of CLT

	1. Language and learning theory	2. Course design and syllabus	3. Teacher's and learner's roles	4. Classroom interactions	5. Error correction	6. Materials and activities	7. CLT- related difficulties
Mean	4.31	4.39	4.17	3.99	4.00	3.96	3.73
SD	.337	.509	.324	.372	.532	.510	.462

Note: Groups are evaluated according to the rating scale which ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

As the Table 7.11 illustrates, the higher composite mean score of the pro-CLT groups compared with the composite score of the CLT-related challenges reveals that even though the teachers see and recognize the problems along the way of implementation, they still hold highly positive attitudes towards and acceptance of CLT (composite mean score of the pro-CLT groups – M=4.20; composite score of the CLT-related Challenges group – M=3.73).

As was mentioned above (Section 7.2.5), questionnaire items 13-20 were analyzed separately. This part of the questionnaire helps indicate how accurate the teachers' understandings of the value and aims of the concrete teaching activities are and thus supplements the information obtained through the teacher interviews and helps provide a comprehensive answer to RQ3 (*How well do the teachers understand the theoretical underpinnings of Communicative Language Teaching?).*

Overall, it was revealed that teachers evaluated quasi-skills development activities as still useful to some extent (composite mean score M=2.18, SD=.815), whereas the usefulness of the real skills development activities was estimated at a much higher level, ranging from the evaluation ratings of "useful" to "highly useful" (composite mean score=3.67, SD=.470).

[5] For more details and frequency analysis of each item of the group, see Appendix 7.5.

A Paired Samples T-test was applied to check the significance of these differences. The difference was proved to be statistically significant (*p.*=.000). For more detailed analysis of how various language activities were evaluated by the teachers, see Appendix: 7.6).

Research question 5: *Are there any challenges that the teachers consider as obstacles to the successful application of CLT in Georgia?*

As mentioned above (Section 7.2.5), the data obtained through the questionnaire items 47-60 (see Appendix 7.3) supplemented the interview information regarding teachers' evaluations of the CLT-related challenges that exist in Georgia. Table 7.12 below lists the typical CLT-related challenges as found in the literature and the mean scores of the teacher ratings with regard to the difficulties outlined: the higher the score, the more problematic the teachers think the challenge in question is in the Georgian context:

Table 7.12: The mean scores of the CLT-related challenges reported by the teachers in Georgia, subdivided into four thematic groups

Source of difficulty	Mean
A. Teacher-related	
1. Low language proficiency makes it difficult for teachers to practice CLT	4.77
2. The influence of older methods makes it difficult to practice CLT	3.34
3. Teachers need to have a better theoretical understanding of CLT	4.50
4. The fear of using a novel method	3.06
Mean	**3.92**
B. Learner-related	
1. Learners are given too much independence in the learning process	3.00
2. It is difficult to involve all learners in the communicative learning process	3.52
3. It is difficult to make learners speak in the target foreign language	3.48
4. Mixed-level learner groups are difficult to deal with in the CLT lesson	4.35
Mean	**3.58**
C. Administration-related	
1. There are not enough methodology trainings in CLT	4.09
2. There are not enough teaching resources for CLT application	4.30
3. Large classes make CLT application difficult	4.11
4. There is little time allocated for covering a CLT course	3.29
5. Grammar-driven examination system has a negative effect on CLT	2.52
Mean	**3.66**
D. CLT-related	
1. CLT takes much preparation time	3.90
2. CLT is related with many classroom management problems	4.11
3. Assessment of learners' communicative competence is a challenge	4.15
Mean	**4.05**

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale 1-5(1=this is not a challenge; 5=this is a major challenge).

Questionnaire data analysis revealed somewhat similar results to the interview questions regarding the CLT-related challenges; The challenges that were mentioned most frequently in the interviews – lack of professional training, insufficient resources and large classes, as well as classroom management difficulties also had the highest mean scores in the questionnaires; the examination system had low scores both in the interviews and in the questionnaires, which shows that the the teachers do not see this as a major problem in Georgia. However, some discrepancy was observed with regard to the language assessment issue: whereas assessment of learners' communicative competence was never mentioned as a problem in the interviews, in the questionnaires the same item received a high score of 4.15. Also, teacher-related difficulties (*low language proficiency; the influence of the older methods*) did not come up in the interviews much (it was mentioned only four times), whereas in the questionnaires, they were rated as very challenging (M=4.77; M=4.50). Other

items in the *Challenges* sections of the interviews and questionnaires revealed only moderate variability (for more detailed statistics, see Appendix 7.7).

Research question 6: *Do school type and certain teacher characteristics affect the study results significantly?*

In order to find out whether certain social factors had an effect on the research outcomes, such independent variables as the 'school type', teacher ' age', 'sex', 'experience', 'specialization', 'academic degree', 'teacher training' were looked at for each group of the questionnaire separately (see also Section 7.2.1). Out of these variables, 'teacher training', 'specialization', and 'sex' were a priori excluded from the analysis, since all the participants claimed they had undergone many teacher training courses; the vast majority of the respondents had either a pedagogical or a philological academic background; and all but one of the teachers were female, so that these variables would have no differentiating effect. Consequently, only the factors 'school type', 'teacher age', 'teaching experience' and 'academic degree' were preserved as variables possessing potentially significant effects. These independent variables each had two or more levels; consequently, both an Independent Samples T-test and ANOVA were applied for the data analysis purposes.

As a result of the analysis, it was revealed that only the 'school type' had an statisticallt significant effect on the study results: private and public school results in teachers' attitudes towards error correction methods (Thematic group 5) were detected to be significantly different, with the private school teachers tending to be more in favor of CLT-type error correction techniques than the public school teachers, the effect size estimated at $F(3, 92) = 4.26$, $p.=.008$.

7.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has sought to explore English language teachers' awareness of and compliance with the official language teaching recommendations, their understanding of the CLT theoretical underpinnings as well as their attitudes towards CLT. The chapter has also discussed the challenges that teachers acknowledge as obstacles to the successful implementation of the communicative method they try to apply in their everyday teaching practice. The results of the interviews and questionnaires provide information to answer the six research questions formulated at the beginning of the chapter. Based on the data obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. English language teachers' awareness of the official language policies and language standards in Georgia

As was revealed from the interviews (see Section 7.3.1), most of the respondents (70%) had some awareness of the language policy documents,

quite a few of them (20%) had no awareness at all, and only 10% of the interviewees demonstrated a full knowledge of the details the document offers regarding the foreign-language teaching recommendations and goals set by the Ministry of Education of Georgia. This finding shows certain improvement of the overall situation with regard to policy awareness revealed on the teachers' part explored in 2001, where 63.7% of the teachers interviewed reported no awareness of the policy paper. The author of the study, Tevzadze, expresses her views about the situation stating that "it is depressing that a professional group has such a low awareness of documents which form the policy they should be implementing" (Tevzadze, 2001:38). The present study also showed that the Public Peripheral school teachers tended to be significantly less informed of the language policy and methodology reforms than the teachers from all other school types investigated (see Table 7.4).

2. Compliance with the official language policies and language standards in Georgia

As for how closely the teachers claim to follow the language teaching recommend-dations, approximately the same distribution is witnessed with regard to compliance as it was in the case of the teachers' awareness of the officially proposed language teaching method and its underpinnings: almost no cases of full compliance were detected (see Table 7.7). Many of the teachers turned out to have the course books as their main source for teaching guidelines, lesson plans and teaching materials. Many of the participants (12 teachers) confessed practicing a teaching method that they had developed "on their own", and what is more, all the interviewees admitted being fully in charge by themselves of developing and choosing the tests for their own students' mid-term and end-of-year assessment purposes, without external evaluation being involved in any way. No significantly different situation was detected among the groups of teachers with different characterists nor across the differenent school types.

3. Teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of Communicative Language Teaching

The quest into the level of the English language teachers' understanding of the theories behind Communicative Language Teaching, explored through interviews with 21 secondary school English language teachers in Georgia, revealed that little methodological conceptualization has been construed by teachers on the basis of academic or professional studies, as is evidenced by there being very few cases of a full and accurate understanding of CLT detected in the interviews (see Table 7.9 and 7.8). The results instead ranged from no understanding at all, or an inaccurate understanding, to a fragmented or partial understanding. The largest number of teachers interviewed (52%) belonged to

the category of those with a partial or inaccurate understanding. Many of them held beliefs about CLT that were not consistent with the actual underpinnings of this approach. Some viewed CLT as being aimed at developing conversational skills only; some saw it as involving only speaking and listening skills development, and as including very little or no grammar instruction. Quite a large number (12 out of 21) of the teachers interviewed demonstrated misunderstandings regarding such basic language concepts as language skills and language activities (see Section 7.3.1). Their interpretations of what exactly Communicative Competence meant included such interpretation as teaching learners basic conversational skills, or teaching survival language with very little grammar involved.

Two of the teachers in the Private Central schools, however, did hold good understanding of CLT. They demonstrated an acknowledgement of the importance of focusing on such CLT-supported language teaching aspects as functional language use, skills development; the significance of employing communicative interaction patterns in the process of teaching, such as pair/group work, rather than having an exclusively teacher-centered environment; and the necessity of employing communicative activities, such as debates, discussions and project work, was also mentioned by them.

According to Maclellan and Soden (2003:119), as long as the teachers hold wrong, vague or superficial understandings of the teaching methodology they are recommended to employ, there will be little chance to actually change much in this respect. Day (1999) further elaborates that "change which is not internalized is likely to be cosmetic and temporary" (as cited in Karakhanyan, 2011:70). A low level of integration of the principles and of understandings might allow the suspicion that teachers' classroom practice, in most cases, are not likely to be driven by CLT-compatible experiences. For this reason, classroom observations were also undertaken in the study, as described in Chapter 9.

4. Teachers' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching

Overall, there was a very highly positive attitude reported by the teachers towards all aspects of pro-CLT theories and classroom practices (see Table 7.11), which means that, in theory at least, teachers are supportive of CLT and ready to switch from solely grammar-driven teaching to more communicative, skills-oriented language instruction.

5. The challenges that the teachers consider as obstacles to the successful application of Communicative Language Teaching in the Georgian context

The data obtained through the interviews and the questionnaires reveal that even though secondary school English language teachers in Georgia favor CLT, they see practical problems associated with its implementation as well.

There were a number of issues that were reported by the English teachers as posing barriers to the successful application of Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia (see Tables 7.9 and 7.11). It is important to note that the teachers talked less about problems related to factors involving their own standing, mainly instead emphasizing administration and learner-related difficulties, demonstrating a lack of readiness for self-evaluation and a tendency to shift accountability onto third parties. In the interviews, the teachers were not as open about discussing teacher-related problems as they were in the questionnaires, where they admitted to most of the problems of this category. For example, teachers' admitted the need for a further language training, the finding which is in line with the previous study results conducted in Georgia in 2001 (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:112). Unlike the informants of Tkemaladze et al. (2001:112), however, the teachers involved in my study acknowledged the need for methodology training in CLT as well (see Table 7.12). The interviewees who held the position of Head of Language Departments at their schools seemed the least critical about the challenges there were, revealing a higher sense of accountability towards the learning/teaching process, and thus seeking to present the situation in a better light.

The difference between the difficulties reported in the interviews and those indicated in the questionnaires was revealed in connection with a rather important area of CLT – assessment of the learners' communicative competence. It is interesting to note that the rather problematic communicative language assessment issue did not surface in any of the teachers' interviews; however, when asked about it in the questionnaire, teachers rated them as rather problematic. This can be explained by the deduction that even though in theory they see CLT-compatible assessment as a challenge, in practice it is not causing them difficulties, as most of the teachers reported that they design the tests themselves or lift their mid-term assessment materials directly from the course books, with clear indications that no standardized assessment system is used by English language teachers at secondary schools during or at the end of the academic year. This finding is also similar to the results of an earlier study conducted in Georgia by Tkemeladze et al. (2001) who also report largely non-standardized form of applied assessment techniques and tools at secondary schools in Georgia (2001:20, 113). Today, teachers are still given freedom to choose which form and material to use for testing purposes: the use of non-communicative forms of assessment of learners' language proficiency was

reported by all the teachers interviewed. The majority of the teachers test the language forms and lexical units they covered during the year, paying less attention to testing learners' Communicative Competence through the language skills.

6. The effect of the 'school type' as well as certain teacher-related characteristics on the study results

Investigation of differences between age and sex groups, or between teachers of differing academic qualifications and levels of teacher training, revealed no statistical significance. Only 'school type' proved to have significant effects on some of the research outcomes. Exploration of the effect of the variable 'school type' on the research outcomes revealed that the level of teachers' awareness of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages and its recommendations and goals as well as their understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT vary across different school types: teachers at Public Peripheral schools tend to have significantly lower awareness than teachers at other school types; as for the understanding level, a difference was detected between Public Peripheral and Private Central school teachers. No other variables had a significant impact on the study results (see Section 7.3.2, RQ 6).

In terms of teachers' attitudes towards CLT, here as well, the situation varied slightly only across the school types, and with regard to only two thematic groups presented in the questionnaire: representatives of the Public Peripheral schools demonstrating significantly less pronounced preferences for pro-CLT language teaching activities and error correction techniques. Teachers' perceptions of the challenges that there were did not vary much across the different school types, nor did any other teacher-related independent variables have any effect in this regard either.

The present chapter has sought to explore the state of affairs of English language teaching situation in Georgia in theory. The next chapter carries on with a similar investigation relating to the attitudes of Georgian learners of English towards Communicative Language Teaching.

CHAPTER 8: LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (STUDY 2)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Having explored the situation with regard to how receptive the teachers of English at secondary schools in Tbilisi are towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), in this chapter the attitudes of other important agents of the study process – language learners' – are looked into.

8.1.1 The aim of the study

Generally speaking, the efficiency of a language methodology is largely determined by its intrinsic relevance and accuracy of the theories on which it is based, the context in which it is applied, and the correspondence it offers with the needs and requirements it is meant to meet. The most reliable resource for the measurement of the efficiency of a language teaching methodology is learners' attained proficiency level in the target foreign language (the situation in this regard will be explored in Chapter 10). However, it is also interesting to look into the sometimes not very obvious factors which might be at work in the process of methodology application, either hindering or contributing to arriving at successful or unsuccessful learning outcomes. Where learners as well as teachers stand in terms of their learning/teaching methodology orientation (See Table 7.11) is widely considered to be an important link in the chain connecting teaching methodology with its ultimate goal, which is the improvement of learners' communicative proficiency (Kern, 1995; Weinstein, 1994; Peacock, 2001). Thus, it was deemed important to look into how learners feel about the methodology to which they are exposed: do they accept or reject it? Do they feel positive or negative about the learning experiences that it offers? After all, it is the learners who are the major agents of the language instruction process at whom the methodology is aimed.

Chapter Overview

In Section 8.1.2 the general background to the chapter is presented; the importance of the attitude factor in language teaching is touched upon; and the connections and place of the present chapter among other studies in this dissertation are given. Section 8.1.2 also presents the four research questions that will be dealt with in Chapter 8, the answers to which are provided in the subsequent sections of the chapter. Section 8.3 discusses the research methodology applied in this part of the study: the research variables (8.2.1), the research medium (8.2.2), participant characteristics (8.2.3), data collection tools, procedure, and the material obtained (8.2.4). The statistical analysis approaches

adopted in this study are discussed in detail in Section 8.2.5. Section 8.3 reports the results of the analysis and Section 8.4 provides a summary, concluding comments and implications of the study.

8.1.2 The Theoretical background and the research questions

Before discussing the importance of learners' attitudes towards teaching methodology to which they are exposed in more detail, and before exploring Georgian learners' attitudes towards CLT, it is important to discuss the notion of "attitude" in general and its role in the language learning process. To start with, what is attitude? According to the *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2009), attitude is "a way of feeling or thinking about someone or something, especially, as this influences one's behaviour". Gardner (1985: 91) claims that attitude is "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object" (cited in Smadi & Al- Ghazo, 2013:63). According to Brown (2001:61), "attitude refers to our feelings and shapes our behaviours towards learning". According to Victori and Lockheart (1995:225), "[g]eneral assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of learning and teaching". According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), there exist two types of attitudes towards language learning: "integrative" and "instrumental". An integrative attitude is when the motive for learning is communication with people belonging to the culture of the target language, while an instrumental motive is to learn a language to fulfill more pragmatic goals, such as getting a job or passing an examination. Lambert further elaborates: "an integrative attitude is more likely to lead to success than an instrumental one" (cited in Macnamara, 1973:37). Communicative Language Teaching, in principle, is supportive of what Lambert calls "the integrative" attitude; however, if properly applied, it can also cater to the "instrumental" needs of the learner, leading to the optimal result. Within this study, it is attempted to find out whether learners in Georgia are more inclined to have more of an "integrative" or "instrumental" attitude towards language learning; information which, in its turn, could to some extent explain learners' positive or less positive disposition towards CLT.

Why is it important that learners have a positive attitude towards a teaching method? Generally speaking, students' attitude is one of the main factors that determine learners' success in language learning (Sarnoff, 1970:279). Research abounds that claims that learner beliefs have a pervasive influence on their academic learning (Horwits, 1988; Gardner, 1985); Brown (1994: 168) gives an example of a Canadian student whose positive attitude towards French, whose desire to understand its speakers and empathy towards the French led to a heightened motivation to learn the French language.Classroom realities that contradict learners' expectations about learning may lead to disappointment and will ultimately interfere with learning

(Horwits, 1988), whereas positive attitude brings out greater overall effort on the language learners' part, and typically results in greater success in terms of progress in language proficiency (Gardner, 1985). According to Stern (1983) "the attitude component contributes at least as much, and often more, to language learning than the cognitive skills", a point also supported by a number of other scholars (cited in Saracaloğlu, 2012:39); Savignon goes as far as claiming that "attitude is without a doubt the single most important factor in a learner's success" (2002:12).

There has also been some discussion regarding what influence learners' attitude towards new teaching approaches can have on teachers. When teachers feel that their status and/or good image might be negatively affected in their lerarners' eyes by the teaching methodology they use, they might have some reservations about using that mode of instruction (Janssen et al., 2013:14). The opposite reaction is anticipated when teachers feel that new methods are appreciated by their learners and that the practice of these methods makes a positive impact on their image and professionalism. Thus, the role and importance of learners' perceptions of the teaching methodology they are exposed to is significance in this sense as well.

Interdisciplinary research also suggests that various types of individual differences, such as sex, age, nationality, learning style and personality type, might largely affect learners' attitudes; so, these factors have to be explored in order to detect how they influence learner attitudes towards language learning (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Wenden, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Rifkin, 2000). One such study by Saracaloğlu (2000) indicates that students' attitudes towards language learning differ according to the type of school they attend (2000:40); Baranov (1986) in his study with secondary school students (6th, 8th and 10th graders) in the former Soviet Union, attributes minimal effect to the factor sex; whereas Csepo and Nikolovy (2002) find parents' educational background to be an affective factor on learners' evaluations of foreign language learning (as cited in Saracaloğlu, 2000:41). Thhe present study the following independent variables were included: 'school type' and 'learner sex' (see further discussion in Section 8.2.1).

To sum up, the importance of how learners evaluate language teaching methodology cannot be underestimated. If a positive basis on the learners' part towards the methodology is lacking, this has to be one of the hindering factors worth considering in the case of learners' unexpectedly low language proficiency outcomes. Achknowledging the importance of learners' attitudes in the study process, the present study was undertaken – aimed at investigating Georgian language learners' feelings towards CLT. The research questions formulated in order to obtain the data needed for the present study are presented below:

1. What are the attitudes of the secondary school language learners towards Communicative Language Teaching in Tbilisi?
2. What are the evaluations of the secondary school language learners of CLT-related challenges in Georgia?
3. Do learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching differ across a range of school types as well as according to sex?
4. How similar or different are language learners' and teachers' attitudes towards CLT in Georgia?

8.2 METHODOLOGY

8.2.1 Research design

As mentioned above (8.1.2), 'school type' and 'learner sex' have been identified as key independent variables which are expected to have an effect and yield certain variations with respect to learners' attitudes towards CLT in Tbilisi, Georgia.

As for 'sex', despite a scarcity of literature dealing with sex as an effect on learner beliefs towards language learning, there still are some findings which indicate that sex difference might influence significantly learners' at language itudes towards learning (Siebert, 2003; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007); however, there are also findings which suggest the opposite (Tercanlioglu, 2005). Taking into account the paucity and the contradictory character of the research available on sex differences on students' beliefs about foreign language learning, it was deemed interesting to conduct further analysis and contribute to filling the gap existing in current research in this area, which has, to date, remained largely unexplored in Georgia.

'School type', whether the school has a central or a peripheral location and whether it is private or public, is believed to be an important factor which might have an effect on learners' learning preferences, as well as on their motivation. The nature of study-related difficulties and the learning opportunities offered to learners is also expected to vary across different school types (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005:49); Thus, as a result of the predetermined school selection criteria, as in Chapter 7, twelve secondary schools in total, representing various school types in Tbilisi, Georgia, were approached: four Public Central, four Public Peripheral, two Private Central, and two Private Peripheral schools. The names of the schools participating in the study are not revealed for confidentiality reasons.

The majority of the study participants represent public schools; the number of learners at private schools belonging to the age group under research (mainly twelve-/thirteen-year old pupils; see also Table 8.2), in some cases, was as low as fourteen per school, whereas at public schools the number could be as high as 126. The uneven balance of learner distribution across the

private and public sectors can be explained by the fact that, overall, at private schools, the classes, as well as the number of students in them, tend to be fewer compared with the public schools, where there were more classes, which were also much more heavily attended than at the private schools.[1]

Access to public schools was also more easily obtained than to private ones, where, in some cases, the administration was reluctant to cooperate, saying the study was felt to interfere with the academic process at school. These facts explain the higher number of participating public schools and learners in the study. Table 8.1 summarizes the school and learner distribution information.

Table 8.1: Participating school and learner distribution

School type		Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Public Central	School A	87	44.7%
	School B	73	
	School C	42	
	School D	108	
Public Peripheral	School E	43	40.1%
	School F	77	
	School G	126	
	School H	32	
Private Central	School I	22	5.8%
	School J	18	
Private Peripheral	School K	51	9.4%
	School L	14	
Total number: 693			

8.2.2 Study participants

The main criteria applied for the participant selection in this study was their age: learners had to have suitable cognitive development necessary for being able to analyze and adequately respond to the statements presented in the questionnaires. As a result of piloting the questionnaires, the optimal age group was estimated at twelve/thirteen years of age – seventh/eighth graders. More details of the participant age-related characteristics are provided in Table 8.2 below.

[1] For details, see Chapter 7, footnote 3.

Table 8.2: Participating learner age distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
11	2	.3
12	116	16.7
13	475	68.5
14	78	11.3
15	22	3.2
Total	693	100

As it can be seen from the table, by far the most learners (68%) were thirteen years old, followed by the second biggest number of twelve-year-olds (16.7%), followed by learners of fourteen (14%), only a few being fifteen (3.2%); and just two of the learners were eleven years old. The choice regarding the participants' age turned out to be appropriate for the study: the learners were perfectly capable of completing the tasks provided and seemed both cooperative and enthusiastic in the process of the research. The mean score for the participants' age was: M=13; SD=.647.

As for the learners' sex, both male and female learners participated in the study, the female participants (53.1%) slightly outnumbering the male ones (46.9%).

Incentives to participate

Permission was first obtained from both the Ministry of Education and the individual school administrations before approaching the secondary school learners in Tbilisi. The learners were asked to participate so as to contribute to making foreign language instruction in Georgia more modern and compatible with the communicative needs of the present day. All the learners approached agreed to participate and did so voluntarily. The questionnaire collection was completed without any reported complaints. A confidentiality guarantee was provided to the school administrations, as well as the head teachers of the classes approached.

8.2.3 Data collection tools

Learner questionnaire

The data about learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching were collected through 30-item, mixed-model design questionnaires. The items in the questionnaire were grouped into eight CLT-related thematic groups, presented in three separate sections of the questionnaire: *Section 1* (items 1-17): (1) Language and Learning Theory; (2) Error Correction; (3) Teachers' and Learners' roles; (4) Classroom Interaction; (5) Course and Syllabus design; (6)

Teaching Material; *Section 2* (items 18-25): (7) CLT versus non-CLT activities; *Section 3* (items 26-30): (8) CLT-related Difficulties (see Appendix 8.1).

To avoid complication or confusion on the students' part, the questionnaires were in Georgian and devised in the simplest possible way for the young learners to complete (see Appendix 8.1A). Items 1-17 consist of pairs of statements, presented in *a.* and *b.* answer format: "a" options present a view in line with the tenets of CLT, whereas "b" options are in line with a more form-focused style of teaching. Students could circle "a", "b" or both variants. Statements 18-25, on the other hand, deal with language activities: learners were invited to respond to them by indicating on a 5-point scale their preference ranging from (5) – 'I like it very much' to (1) – 'I do not like it at all'. Items 26-30 (Section 8) of the questionnaire deal with CLT-related challenges; in this part, the learners were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how problematic they considered the CLT-related issues presented were in their own context; the ratings ranged from (5) – 'a very big challenge' to (1) 'no challenge at all'. For more convenient and comparable data presentation purposes, all the obtained scores were eventually changed into a similar 1–5 rating scale; an initial evaluation scale format emerged as a result of a pilot study conducted with a number of learners belonging to approximately the same age group as the actual study participants, as the most appropriate and relevant data collection form.

Questionnaire coding and processing

The completed learners' questionnaires, the questionnaire items as well as all the independent variables ('school type' and 'sex'), were coded and entered into SPSS (version 20.0) for statistical analysis. Different categorizations were made, starting with individual schools, and then grouping them into broader categories. This was done to check at what level and with which component of the study the significant effect of the 'school type' variable lay. All the response options were also coded numerically to allow for more statistical analysis options in SPSS.

8.2.4 Data collection procedure

A total of 693 learners from the participating secondary schools in Tbilisi completed and returned the questionnaires. An average of two classes of sixth or seventh-graders were also observed at each school, which provided an opportunity to see learners during the actual learning process (for more information about lesson observations, see 9.2.), and about half of the total of 693 learners who completed the questionnaires were also audio-recorded (350 learners), so that their speech could be evaluated linguistically and analyzed (for more information see 10.2).

To guarantee an easy questionnaire distribution and data collection procedure, the questionnaires were distributed and collected during lessons in progress, which guaranteed a 100% return rate. Also I was present while the learners were completing the questionnaires, as this provided an opportunity for
the participants to ask questions and to receive explanations in the case of any misunderstanding. As the learner questionnaire was not very extensive and could be completed in about 10-15 minutes, the procedure did not disrupt the lessons too much.

8.2.5 Data analysis[2]

Reliability test

Before running any other tests to explore the data obtained through the questionnaires, the internal reliability of the questionnaire items was tested using the reliability analysis test in SPPS. As a result, which reached an acceptable level of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was detected (α =.60). Not very high level of internal reliability of the questionnaire items might be explained by the fact that consistency coefficients are normally suppressed when the rating scale is short, e.g. only three points (Harris & Brown, 2010), which was the case with the present questionnaire.
Even though it is agreed that the alpha level should be at 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), in case of exploratory studies like my own Cronbach's Alpha values >=0.60 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2005). Thus, for the present study, the existing inter-rater reliability level can be considered satisfactory.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied for data analysis purposes. The data were explored in as detailed a way as possible, starting with analyzing them in terms of frequency counts, means and standard deviations for each item of the questionnaire (see Appendix 8.2), and only later calculating the composite mean scores of the broader thematic groups presented in the questionnaire. These composite variables were then subjected to further inferential statistical testing.

All the background independent variables included in the study were also explored with the help of descriptive and frequency analyses, the descriptions of which have already been provided in 8.2.3). The effects of the independent variables of the study were checked by adopting inferential statistics. As already mentioned (Section 8.2.1), only the effects of the variable

[2] For the definitions of the statistical terms used in this as well as other chapters of this dissertation, see Statistics Reference Page above.

'school type' and 'sex' on the research outcomes were explored here. To check the difference between the various group means and the effect size of these variables on the research outcomes an ANOVA[3] was conducted; as normality of data (checked with a Shapiro-Wilks test) underlying ANOVA were not quite met, an adjusted F test, namely, the Brown-Forsythe statistic, which is more robust to such violations, had to be used in SPSS. To detect where exactly the inter-group difference lay, follow-up post-hoc analysis tests were applied. Again, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not satisfied (Equal Variances Not Assumed), the more robust Tamhane's T2 test was used instead of the common alternatives of Bonferroni or Scheffe, which could have been applied if equal variances had been assumed.

The effects of the 'sex' variable on the research outcomes were checked with an Independent Samples T-test in SPSS. A Paired Samples T-test was employed to compare the participating learners' attitudes towards CLT versus non-CLT activities, as well as for conducting a comparative analysis of the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT.

To analyze the relationship between the variables and to determine the correlation between the different aspects of CLT and learners' attitudes towards each of them (whether learners who scored highly on certain CLT-related questionnaire thematic groups also scored highly in some other areas), a default type of Correlation Test in SPSS – Pearson's *r* – was performed on the data. For more information regarding the data analysis approach adopted in this study, see Section 7. 2.5.

8.3 STUDY RESULTS

The results reported in this study are of a quantitative nature and help provide the answers to the research questions formulated at the beginning of this chapter. To answer the first research question, frequency analyses, descriptive statistics tests, as well as inferential statistics tests were run. [4]

Research Question 1: *What are the attitudes of the secondary school language learners towards Communicative Language Teaching?*

Learners' attitudes towards CLT have been explored by letting the participants rate the CLT principles, presented in six thematic groups in the Learner Questionnaires (see 8.2.4 and Appendix 8.1). The groups have been presented

[3] For more information about this as well as about all the subsequent statistical terms used in this Chapter, see Statistics Reference Page above.

[4] For the details of the frequency and descriptive statistics of each item of the questionnaire, see Appendices 8.2 and 8.3.

in a similar way and order as in the case of the Teacher Questionnaires (for more discussion about the structure and rationale behind the questionnaires, see Section 7.2.4). The results obtained through the descriptive statistics tests run on the composite scores of the CLT-related thematic groups are provided in Table 8.3:

Table 8.3: Learners' attitudes towards CLT principles presented in six thematic groups

Questionnaire thematic groups	Mean	SD
1. Language and learning theory	3.60	.696
2. Error correction	3.64	1.205
3. Classroom interaction	2.82	1.127
4. Teacher's and learner's roles	3.89	1.037
5. Syllabus and course design	2.96	1.039
6. Teaching materials and activities	3.98	1.300
Mean score: 3.48		

Note: The mean scores are presented on a 1-5 scale (5=highly positive attitude – 1=negative attitude)

As the overall results show, even though the learners' attitudes seem to be more CLT-oriented than not, there were some aspects towards which they revealed a somewhat less CLT inclination than to the others, such as classroom interaction and syllabus and course design, for instance.

To provide a somewhat more concrete description of the learners' attitudes towards CLT principles, a discussion of the frequency counts and descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items, grouped within the above mentioned thematic groups (see Table 8.3), is provided below; more details of the analyses outcomes can be found in Appendix 8.2).

Within thematic group 1 of the questionnaire, Language and Learning Theory, which groups together issues related to language and learning theories, the learners expressed their positive attitude towards 'foreign language use in class' instead of Georgian (M=4.70), as well as towards having a more 'analytical approach to language learning' versus 'rote memorization' (M=4.69). The attitudes towards 'form focus' versus 'meaning focus' in language learning leaned towards acknowledging the importance of form and accuracy focus in the process of learning, rather than meaning and fluency (M=2.62); the same kind of not very CLT-compatible attitude was expressed with regard to the 'inductive' versus 'deductive' teaching approach, a preference being given to explicit explanations of the grammar rules rather than exposure to the discovery approach to teaching the language forms (M=2.40).

As for thematic group 2 of the questionnaire, which deals with Error Correction techniques, a rather neutral position was revealed on the matter of when mistakes should be corrected: as soon as errors are made, interrupting learners in the process of free speaking (an anti-CLT approach), or rather

afterwards, in the form of a delayed feedback (pro-CLT approach). On this issue, about an equal number of anti-CLT and pro-CLT positions were reported (M=2.94). However, the vast majority of the learners (80%) expressed a favorable attitude towards the CLT-supported self-correction techniques (M=4.34).

As far as the learners' attitudes towards Classroom Interaction patterns are concerned (thematic group 3), here a preference was shown for a more teacher-driven form of teaching. This reveals a somewhat conservative way of thinking on the students' part, who attribute the greater importance to 'teacher-student' rather than 'student-student' interaction (M=2.11), while they also approved of having 'increased teacher talking time' in the lesson (M=2.70). Within this section, a distinctly pro-CLT attitude was expressed towards 'pair and group work activities' only (M=3.56).

Learners' attitudes towards Teacher and Learner Roles in the language learning process (thematic group 4) revealed a highly pro-CLT orientation by pupils, one acknowledging the importance of learners' independence and initiative in the learning process (M=4.17), as well as the importance of teachers' empathy and attention towards individual learners (M=4.06), their learning needs and interests (M=3.45; for more details of how the outcomes were calculated, see Section 8.2.5).

The findings with respect to Language Syllabus and Course Design (thematic group 5) revealed a somewhat reticent attitude on the learners' part. Whilst a preference towards 'skills-oriented teaching' (M=3.35) as well as testing (M=3.30) was reported by the Georgian learners, when asked whether it was more important that the language program prepared them for real-life communication or for upcoming tests or exams, a bare majority of learners (52%) supported a teaching style that would prepare and help them pass the exams successfully rather than help with the development of real-life communication skills and competence (M=2.22).

As for preferences with regard to teaching materials and the nature of language activities (Group 6), authenticity (M=4.06) and a genuinely communicative nature of teaching materials (M=3.91) was reported to be important for the majority of learners (72% and 67%, respectively).

A separate contrastive analysis was conducted on the items belonging to thematic group 7 of the questionnaire: attitudes towards CLT versus non-CLT language teaching activities. The analysis outcomes are presented in Table 8.4:

Table 8.4: Comparison of learners' attitudes towards CLT and non-CLT activities

7. CLT and non-CLT language activities	Mean	SD
CLT activities		
18. Debates and discussions	4.06	1.043
19. Presentations	4.37	.958
20. Language games	4.19	1.011
21. Dialogues and role plays	3.89	1.165
Non-CLT activities		
22. Fill-in-the-gaps exercises	3.65	1.043
23. Reciting a memorized text	2.61	1.327
24. Grammar/vocabulary exercises	3.82	1.070
25. Dictations	2.80	1.361

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1-5 (5=like very much; 4=like; 3 =have a neutral attitude; 2=do not like; 1=do not like at all)

The results reveal that even though CLT activities are largely welcome by learners in Georgia, some of the non-CLT activities are appreciated almost as much: grammar and vocabulary and the fill-in-the-gaps exercises written exercises, for instance. At the same time, the non-CLT activities such as rote memorization and recitation as well as dictations were found to be quite unpopular among the language learners in Georgia (more detailed results of the frequency counts can be found in Appendix 8.2).

To compare learners' overall attitude towards CLT and non-CLT activities, and to detect whether the difference was significant, a descriptive statistics analysis, as well as a Paired Samples T-test was conducted on the composite scores of the items dealing with CLT (18-21) and non-CLT activities (22-25). The results are reported in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5: Mean composite scores of learners' preferences towards CLT and non-CLT activities

Activity type	Mean	SD
CLT activities	4.1270	.68249
Non-CLT activities	3.2197	.74261

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1–5 (5=like very much, 4=like, 3 =have a neutral attitude; 2=do not like, 1=do not like at all).

The outcomes of the analyses reveal that, overall, learners' attitudes towards CLT activities are significantly more positive than towards non-CLT activities — t (692) =25.58, $p.$=.000).

To check whether learners' attitudes towards various CLT thematic groups correlated with one another or not, a Pearson's Correlation test was run on the learner data. What was detected from this were low or insignificant inter-item correlations, which were not deemed worthwhile of further analysis.

Research Question 2: *What are the evaluations of the secondary school language learners of CLT-related challenges in Georgia?*

The data obtained through questionnaire items 26-30 (Section 3, thematic group 8) helped find out how problematic language learners thought application of CLT was at secondary schools in Georgia. Only the statements with regard to CLT-related challenges which are associated with learners have been included in the Learner Questionnaire, ending up with five items only altogether (see Appendix 8.1). Table 8.6 below lists the items and learners' evaluations of the degree of challenge they attach to each of them – the lower the score, the less problematic the learners find the issues.

Table 8.6: Learner evaluations of the CLT-related challenges

CLT-related challenges	Mean	SD
26. It is difficult for me to study in a foreign language	2.34	1.650
27. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in a foreign language with a Georgian classmate	1.94	1.548
28. Having many students in the group makes it difficult to learn a foreign language	3.11	1.851
29. It is difficult for me to get interested in the material which is not related to my context (culture, everyday life)	2.57	1.766
30. Speaking activities and pair/group work result in much noise, which makes it difficult for me to learn a language	2.23	1.684

Note: The items are evaluated on a scale of 1–5 (1=this is not a challenge; 5=this is a major challenge)

While teaching a foreign language, as is often claimed in the English Language Teaching (ELT) literature, especially when describing non-western cultures, the endeavour of persuading students to use the target foreign language in the learning process either makes them shy or anxious (Schmidt et al., 1996:56. This did not prove to be the case in Tbilisis: expressing oneself in a non-native tongue in the language class was not considered problematic by the majority of the participants (item 26), nor did learners rate having a foreign language as a

teaching/learning instrument as very problematic (item 27); heavily populated language classes (item 28) proved to be the biggest challenge for Georgian learners; imported language teaching materials and coursebooks (item 29), which in some cases are not relevant for the Georgian context, were not assessed as a big issue by most of the respondents, nor did the noise and chaotic situation that communicative activities might entail (item 30) cause much inconvenience or disapproval among the majority of learners.

To conclude, as the outcomes presented in Table 8.6 reveal, even though the learners admit some challenges related to CLT application in their own context, the issues are not rated as very problematic by the Georgian learners at secondary schools in Tbilisi.

Research Question 3*: Do learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching differ across the range of school types as well as sex groups?*

A one-way ANOVA and an Independent Samples T-test were conducted to check the effect of the background variables 'school type' as well as 'sex' on the learners' attitude analysis outcomes. As before, three sections of the questionnaire were analyzed and are reported separately. To make extensive data presentation feasible, the calculations were again performed on the composite scores of the three sections of the questionnaire first to reveal general tendencies; then, further, an item-based analysis was performed to find out whether the differences could be observed at a deeper level.

General attitudes towards CLT

The information about the effect size of the 'school type' variable on learners' attitudes towards CLT is presented in Figure 8.1 below.

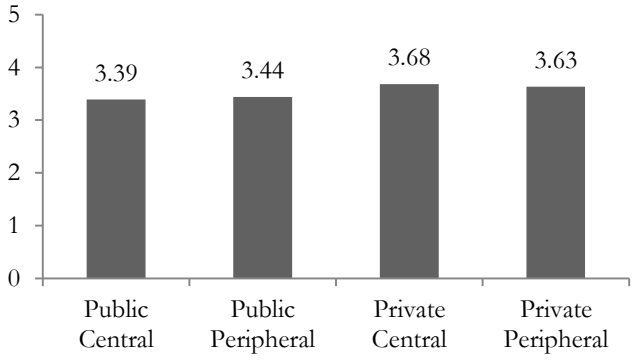

Figure 8.1: A comparison of learners' attitudes towards CLT across various school types

The results of the ANOVA analysis revealed a significant difference between learners' attitudes towards CLT concepts and practices between private and public school pupils, the former revealing a significantly more favorable CLT attitude than the latter, the effect of the 'school type' factor being estimated at F (2, 694)=1.44, *p*=.000. To provide more detailed analysis, ANOVA was run separately on six thematic group scores, as a result of which it was revealed that a statistically significant difference was detected only in the case of Language and Learning Theory (group 1), public school learners scoring lower than private school ones [*F*(3, 693)=12.5, *p*=.000]. To sum up, the analysis of learners' general attitudes towards CLT revealed that the type of school which learners attend might have an effect on their attitudes but only towards the principles belonging to one specific aspect of CLT theory. For more details of ANOVA and post-hoc analyses, see Appendix 8.3.

As for the 'sex' effect on the learners' attitudes, the results of a T-test run on the composite scores of the questionnaire's thematic groups 1-6 showed no statistical differences between male and female groups. A further, more detailed item-based analysis, however, revealed some statistically significant differences in regard to the three CLT principles (items 8, 16 and 17), with girls in each case demonstrating a stronger CLT orientation than boys. More details of each item are provided below:

Item 8: *There should be more student talking time than teacher talking time:* Males: M=2.44/Females: M=3.13; *t* (693)=-5.13, *p.*=.000);

Item 16: *I like it better when the material comes from outside the classroom – the Internet, magazines, newspapers – than from the coursebook* – Males: M=3.85/Females: M=4.24; *t* (693)=-3.23, *p.*=.001).

Item 17: *I would prefer to be taught the language and skills that I will need in real life than the language and skills that will be tested in final exams* – Males: *M*=3.68/Females: M=4.11; *t* (693)=-3.36, *p.*=.001) .[5]

Attitudes towards CLT versus non-CLT activities

An ANOVA test conducted on the learners' attitudes towards CLT versus Non-CLT activities, having 'school type' as an independent variable, yielded the following results:

[5] The mean scores are presented on a five-point scale.

Table 8.7: Learners' attitudes towards CLT and non-CLT activities across various school types

Language activities	School type	Mean	SD
CLT activities	Public Central	4.09	.622
	Public Peripheral	4.27	.567
	Private Central	4.32	.625
	Private Peripheral	3.60	1.07
Non-CLT activities	Public Central	3.30	.715
	Public Peripheral	3.34	.659
	Private Central	2.84	.676
	Private Peripheral	2.55	.839

Note: SD=Standard Deviation.
Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1–5

The evaluations of CLT activities were quite high across all school types; however, the analysis revealed that Private Peripheral school learners gave CLT activities a significantly lower level of approval than their peers from all other school types (F F(3, 693)=19.4, *p*.=.000), a finding, which requires further exploration. As for the attitudes towards non-CLT activities, it was detected that the learners at private schools appreciated such activities significantly less than those at public schools (*p*.=.000).

As for the comparison between the learners' general attitudes towards CLT and non-CLT language activities across the sex groups, an Independent Samples T-test run on the composite scores revealed the results which are provided in Figure 8.2:

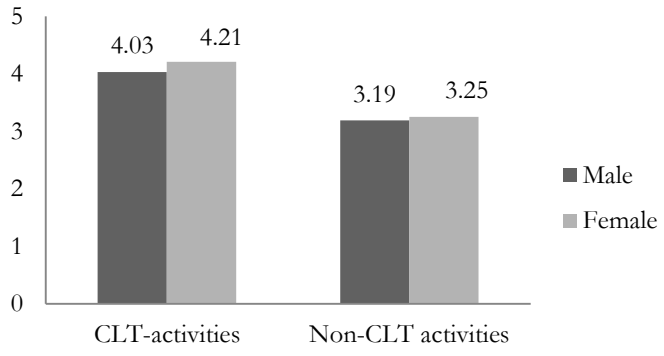

Figure 8.2: Comparison of male and female learners' attitudes towards CLT and non-CLT activities

A statistically significant difference was detected in regard to CLT activities only, with girls demonstrating more preference than males did. Deeper, item-based analysis in this area provided further details: namely, the activities which females favor significantly more than males are Presentations (Males: M=4.23/Females: M=4.49; *t*(693)=-3.49, *p.*=0.001.) as well as Discussions and Debates (Males: M=3.95/Females: M=4.16; *t*(692)=-2.64, *p.*=0.008).

CLT-related difficulties

As for the differentiating effect of the variable 'school type' on learners' evaluation of the CLT-related difficulties, an ANOVA test revealed the following results presented in the Figure 8.3 below:

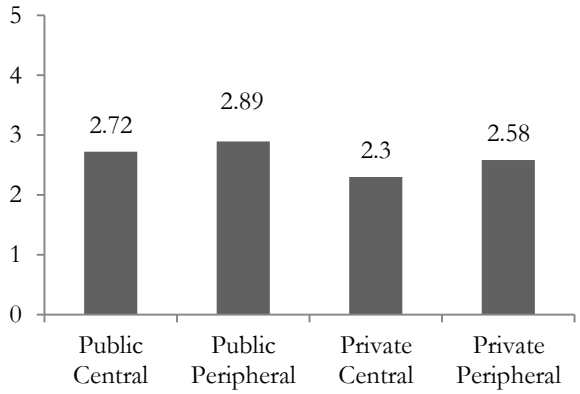

Figure 8.3: Learners' assessment of CLT-related challenges across different school types

To sum up the analysis outcomes, at Private Central schools learners attribute significantly less challenge to CLT implementation in the Georgian context than learners at public schools do, F(3, 989)=5.19, Public Central: *p.*=.023; Public Peripheral: *p.*=.001). For more detailed statistics of each item separately, see Appendix 8.3, Section 3.

The present investigation into female and male learners' evaluation differences regarding CLT-related difficulties yielded nothing of statistical significance.

Research Question 4: *How similar or different are the language learners' and teachers' attitudes towards CLT in Georgia?*

To find out how closely teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT matched, a cross reference to the data presented in Chapter 7 was made. Since the data in

the present and previous study (Chapter 7: Study 1) were generated in the non-comparable ways, and are derived from the different populations, no statistical analysis was possible here; however, for general comparison purposes, they were juxtaposed and are presented in Figure 8.4 below.

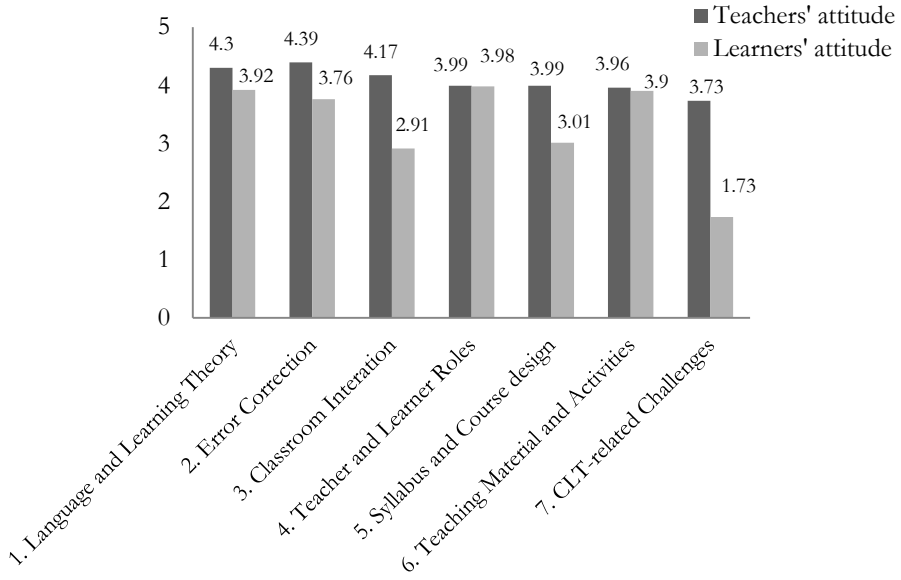

Figure 8.4: Comparison of the teachers' and learners' attitudes Towards various aspects of CLT and CLT-related challenges

The comparison reveals that the notably more CLT-oriented attitude is shown on the teachers' part towards (1) Language and Learning Theory, (2) Classroom Interaction, and (3) Syllabus and Course Design. This means that, theoretically, teachers tend to be more supportive of some aspects of CLT than learners.

As for the CLT-related challenges, learners seem to attribute a visibly lower level of difficulty to the implementation of this method in the Georgian context than the teachers do.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the study presented in this chapter was to gain an insight into learners' attitudes towards CLT and to find out whether they favored the general principles underlying this language teaching methodology, since a favorable attitude on the learners' part is believed to be one of the most important contributing factors to a successful implementation of a teaching method. It was also deemed important to look into how problematic Georgian learners considered the challenges associated with CLT application in Georgia

to be, and how the situation varied in this respect across the different study contexts and between the sexes.

The information obtained through the questionnaires helped provide answers to the four research questions formulated at the beginning of the chapter. The large size of the empirical base of this study (693 learners) allows for generalizable conclusions and statements about the Georgian language learners' attitudes towards CLT at secondary schools in the capital of Georgia.

1. Secondary school language learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching in

With regard to the first research question, the results show that even though learners' overall attitudes towards CLT are quite welcoming and positive (see Table 8.3), more detailed analysis reveals that there still are some aspects towards which learners reveal a somewhat conservative way of thinking, which is more in line with the Grammar Translation Method, the language teaching methodology which enjoyed popularity for a long time before Communicative Language Teaching was introduced in Georgia (see Table 8.3). This is evident from the fact that a majority of learners reported that they considered the knowledge of language forms and accuracy more important than the practical skills and fluency in the target language (Appendix 8.2, items 3 and 4); they also showed a preference towards a more deductive rather than inductive approach to teaching; non-CLT inclinations were also detected towards the error correction techniques, with half the learners contending that mistakes should be corrected immediately, as soon as they are made rather than at a later stage in the form of a delayed feedback (Appendix 8.2, item 5). Learners' attitudes towards teachers' roles in the study process also proved to be of a somewhat non-CLT character: learners showed their appreciation of having teachers as the main agents of the study process, being the center of attention and monopolizing the talking time in the lesson (items 7 and 8); this type of attitude attests to learners' perceptions of the language teacher as a main source of knowledge and a dominant figure whom they prefer to look up to and rely on rather than having to construct their language competence on their own in the process of interacting with their peers.

Controversial attitudes were reported towards Course Design and Language Syllabus: learners admitted the importance of having more language skills work included in their language syllabus (see Appendix 8.2, item 13), but at the same time reported preparation for the examinations and tests as being a more important aspect of their language study in school than focusing on development of their real-life communication skills (item 15). This finding gives grounds for characterizing Georgian learners' attitudes towards language learning as "instrumental" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), the concept and phenomenon discussed in the introductory part of this chapter (Section 8.1).

In terms of the language activities, as already discussed in the analysis part of this chapter (Table 8.5), it must be remarked that even though, overall, CLT activities were more appreciated than non-CLT alternatives, there were some old-fashioned types of activities which were almost as much welcomed by the learners as CLT ones – Grammar and Vocabulary and Fill-in-the-gaps Exercises, for example (for more details, see Appendix 8.2, Section 2)

2. Georgian learners' evaluation of CLT-related challenges in Georgia

Overall, the issues related to CLT implementation in Georgia were rated by learners as moderately challenging: compared with their teachers (Section 7.3.2), the learners rated the issues as less problematic. The biggest challenge reported by the learners, as was the case with the teachers as well (Table 7.10), turned out to be that of language classes consisting of too many students, which learners considered to be an obstacle to successful CLT application and efficient language learning (see Table 8.6). According to the observation provided by Tkemaladze in 2001 regarding the situation at that time; according to Tkemaladze (2001), "the teacher-student ratio [in Georgia] is much lower than those of European countries, such as France, The UK and Holland (20 secondary school students per 1 teacher) and might seem ideal at first sight". However, she also remarks that, this positive fact is in no way an indicator of the language teaching quality in Georgia (2001: 17).

3. Learners' attitude differences towards CLT across various school types and the sexes

Investigation into the differences between the representatives of the four different school types revealed that learners at private schools have considerably more CLT-oriented attitudes than learners at public schools (see Figure 8.1); however not in all aspects of CLT theory (see Appendix 8.3, Section 1). The factor of location (central versus peripheral schools) did not prove to have any significant bearing on the research outcomes.

Even though similar patterns of learners' attitudes had been expected in regard to language activities, here a different situation was revealed:the Private Peripheral schools analysed showed a significantly less favorable attitude towards CLT activities, such as presentations, debates or discussions, language games, dialogues and role plays, than did learners from other school types overall, with Private Central school pupils demonstrating the highest level of support, and Private Peripheral school pupils the lowest, the location factor in this case having an important effect on the research outcomes. As far as non-CLT activities are concerned, the situation was different here: Private Central, as well as private peripheral school learners showed a lesser appreciation of such activities as memorization, recitation and dictation than did the public school informants; however, some non-CLT activities like grammar and

vocabulary teaching, as well as fill-in-the-gaps exercises, proved still to be popular among the learners, albeit more among public school pupils than among private school ones (See Table 8.7; for more details see Appendix 8.3).

As for CLT-related difficulties and learners' perceptions of them at different types of school, insignificant differences were detected between private and Public Peripheral schools, with private sector learners viewing most of the issues as somewhat less problematic than their public school counterparts did. A significant difference was revealed only in regard to foreign language use in the lesson, and to pair- and group-work-related difficulties, and only between Private Central and Public Peripheral school members at that (see Figure 8.3; for more details see Appendix 8.3).

Exploration of the differences between the sexes revealed that, in Georgia, as in many other contexts, the difference between male and female learners' perceptions with regard to many language teaching methodology aspects is minimal (see Section 8.3; also Figure 8.2): only in a few cases was there a stronger CLT orientation detected on the girls' part: these cases comprise items such as 'increased student talking time', 'the use of authentic material' and 'the use of communicative activities' in the study process.

4. Discrepancy between the language learners' and teachers' attitudes towards CLT in Georgia

To summarize and compare the outcomes of Study 1 and Study 2 in terms of teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the language teaching method proposed in the language policy paper of Georgia, the following observation can be made: at secondary schools in Tbilisi language teachers, theoretically, seem to be more welcoming to Communicative Language Teaching than learners are (see Figure 8.4).

And in the end, to sum up the whole Chapter 8 discussion, it can be stated that, overall, Georgian learners' attitudes towards CLT are predominantly positive and favorable, with only a few aspects of it causing a measure of disagreement among the learners. It can also be stated that private school learners in Georgia tend to have a slightly stronger affiliation with Communicative Language Teaching than do public school learners; however, this difference is, in most, cases not significant.

The next study, presented in Chapter 9, looks into more practical aspects of CLT implementation in Georgia – it attempts to measure to what degree the policy and efforts made by the government of Georgia to make foreign language teaching/learning more communicative are actually reflected in English language classes.

CHAPTER 9: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSON OBSERVATIONS (STUDY 3)

9.1 INTRODUTION

Chapter 7 investigated whether language teachers in Georgia were aware of and complied with the language policies suggested by the Ministry of Education of Georgia, as well as whether they had an accurate understanding of the recommended teaching methodology. That analysis revealed that the teachers have not fully internalized the conceptualizations of CLT, and that there is a very limited understanding of what the practical implications of the communicative approach to language teaching are (see Section 7.3.1). However, my exploration of English language teachers' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia revealed that evaluation of the efficiency and the acceptance rate of CLT on the teachers' part was very high (see Section 7.3.2). Learners' acceptance level of CLT was detected to be rather important as well (See Section 8.3). However, the ultimate success of the policy document can only be measured through how it is realized in practice and what outcomes it yields. The former area is explored in the present Chapter, through lesson observations, whereas the latter in Chapter 10, through learners' communicative proficiency assessment in English.

Chapter overview

Section 9.2 discusses the research methodology applied in this study: the research design and variables (9.2.1), participant characteristics (9.2.2), the research tools, the data collection procedure and the amount of research material obtained (9.2.3), data processing (9.2.4) as well as the statistical approaches adopted in this study (9.2.5). Section 9.3 reports the results of the analyses and Section 9.4 provides a summary and concluding comments on the study results.

9.1.1 The aim of the study

As Wada (2002:31) comments with regard to Japan, "without an understanding of the process of syllabus implementation, as opposed to syllabus design, it is impossible to appreciate fully the degree to which Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has spread in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context". According to Allsopp and Doone (2006:19), "theory does not always inform practice", and it is a very common thing to find considerable discrepancies between educators' awareness, understandings and attitudes, on the one hand, and their actual classroom practices, on the other (Karavas-Doukas, 1996:187). With regard to Communicative Language Teaching, Doukas further remarks

that quite often teachers hold misconceptions regarding the type of teaching methodology they follow (Karavas-Doukas, 1996:187). The same view was also voiced by Bal (2006), who reports the results of his study with primary school teachers and concludes that "even though teachers are aware of CLT in terms of theoretical aspects and hold positive attitudes towards CLT, they do not actually use important features of it" (cited in Coskun, 2011:6). According to Karakhanyan (2011:85), even though the importance of teachers' attitudes towards a given teaching approach, and its effects on the actual implementation of a proposed educational policy, must not be underestimated, the genuine reflection of the state of affairs is manifested through teachers' behaviour in the classroom. Karakhanyan (2011:199) considers the fact that she did not look into the teachers' actual teaching practice while exploring their attitudes towards the novel teaching methodologies applied in Armenia as a limitation of her study, which, as she claims, seems as a result deprived of solid documentation of the complexities at actual practice level.

For the above-discussed reasons, it was deemed important to observe what practical understandings and frames of reference language teachers' classroom performance draws upon in Georgia:how their CLT practices are attuned to their personal use of this method in their own unique contexts. Thus, in the study presented in this chapter, the actual language teaching practice is explored: what is attempted is to determine the real level of the communicative nature of language classes in Georgia, to identify the CLT-related challenges, to explore various independent factors which might have an effect on teachers' classroom performance, as well as to measure the discrepancy level between the teachers' thinking and their practical classroom undertakings.

9.1.2 The research questions

The research questions to which this study seeks to find answers are the following:

1. How CLT-oriented is the language teaching process at secondary schools in Tbilisi?
2. What are the practical challenges encountered on the way to CLT application in language classrooms in Georgia?
3. Does school type as well as certain teacher characteristics affect the communicative character of their classroom teaching?
4. Are there any discrepancies between teachers' attitudes towards CLT and their actual teaching practice?

9.2 METHODOLOGY[1]

9.2.1 Research design

The participants who were selected for lesson observations belonged to the group of teachers who were also interviewed, and who completed the questionnaires. This allowed a multi-directional comparison of the teacher-related data: juxtaposition of the teachers' attitudes towards and understanding of CLT underpinnings obtained through the questionnaires as well as through the interviews and the teachers' actual classroom practice. To achieve this effect, interviews, questionnaires as well as observation forms were intentionnally designed in such a way that they referenced more or less the same constructs of language teaching and had roughly the same structural sequence and layout (compare Appendices 7.1, 7.3 and 9.1).

Even though the observations permitted collection of the data about the teachers as well as the learners in the course of this study, bearing in mind the more vital role of a teacher in relation to the implementation of methodological innovation, and in an attempt to make the study more focused and feasible, it was decided to observe mainly the teachers, rather than the learners, in action. The reported results, consequently, will be primarily concerned with the language teachers' classroom performance.

Research variables

The independent variables explored in the present study, as in the study presented in Chapter 7, are context-related variables, i.e. 'the school type' (for more discussion of this research variable selection criterion, see 7.2.1), as well as teacher-related variables: 'age', 'teaching experience' and 'the level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT'. The independent variables, such as 'teacher sex', 'academic degree', 'professional training', have been dropped in this study for reasons already discussed in 7.2.2.

9.2.2 Study participants

The participants of this study were 26 teachers of English from various types of secondary schools in Tbilisi (from peripherally as well as centrally located public and private sectors). The teachers' age-realted information is presented in the Table 9.1 below.

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[1] For the definitions of the statistical terms used in this as well as other chapters of this dissertation, see the Statistics Reference Page above.

Table 9.1: Participating teachers age statistics

Age Groups	Number	Percentage
Between 25-34	2	7.7
Between 35-44	9	34.6
Between 45-54	12	46.2
Between 55-65	3	11.5
Total	26	100

An ANOVA test revealed that the 'school type' does have a significant effect on the study outcomes [F(3, 25)=3.76, *p*=.027]: overall, private school staff tend to be younger than their public school colleagues. However, the difference proved statistically significant only between the Public Peripheral (M=3.13) and Private Central (M=1.80) school types. See the statistics reported in in Table 9.2 below. [2]

Table 9.2: Teachers' age statistics across the four school types

Four school types	Mean
Public Central	2.67
Public Peripheral	3.13
Private Central	1.80
Private Peripheral	2.50
Total	2.62

As for the participating teachers' teaching experience, it ranged from under 5 to over 20 years. See Table 9.3 below.

Table 9.3: Observed teachers' teaching experience

Teaching experience	Number	Percentage
Under five years	2	7.4
Over five years	9	33.3
Over ten years	2	44.4
Over twenty years	3	11.1
Total	26	96.3

Very similar difference patterns were revealed with regard to the teachers' experience as in the case of their age, the effect size estimated at [F(3, 25)=7.69, *p*=0.001]; a statistically significant difference was again detected between Public

[2] The categories for 'teacher age' were given the following values: 1=25-34 (years old); 2=35-44; 3=45-54; 4=55-65.

Peripheral (M=3.13)[3] and Private Central (M=2.00) school representatives' length of experience only, with the Public Peripheral school teachers tending to have longer experience than Private Central school ones.

As for the variable teachers' 'level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT'[4], this surfaced as a research areas in the study presented in Chapter 7, and was analyzed in Section 7.3 (see Table 7.9). Since the teachers participating in the present study were also the ones who were interviewed and completed questionnaires in Study 1, measuring the direct effect of the level of understanding and knowledge of CLT theory on the teachers' classroom perfor-mance was possible and deemed a worthwhile exploration.

9.2.3 Research tools

To check whether a language teaching practice fits within the framework of CLT, one might look for the degree to which the main principles of CLT are substantiated in the classroom (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006:146). Thus, as in the case of the teacher and learner questionnaires (see Appendices 7.3 and 8.1), in conducting these observations, specially pre-designed forms were used which outlined the main principles of CLT derived from the literature, formulated as 39 statements on the observation checklist. The items on the observation form. were also subdivided into seven thematic groups, each dealing with a distinct CLT-related thematic group (see Appendix 9.1).

9.2.4 Data collection procedure

The observation forms were completed during 45-minute lessons. Where allowed, some of the lessons were also digitally-recorded for later analysis and information recollection purposes. During the observations, I and a colleague observer[5] marked each of the observation items 1-26 as True (3), Partly True (2) or Not True (1), depending on whether CLT features were present, partly present or not present at all in the lesson. The degree of CLT-related challenges observed was also evaluated during these observations: items 27-41 were marked as Not a challenge (1); a Partial challenge (2); or an Obvious challenge (3).

In order to gain an accurate idea of typical teaching practice and lesson dynamics, it was attempted, where possible, not to warn teachers beforehand

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[3] The categories for 'teacher experience' were given the following values: 1=under five years of experience; 2=over five; 3=over 10; 4=over twenty.

[4] The categories for 'the level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT' were given the following values: 1=has no understanding; 2=has partial understanding; 3=has full understanding.

[5] A 33-year-old Georgian female, with an extensive English language teaching experience and CELTA qualification.

that they would be observed, so that they would not be tempted to stage the lesson. The lesson was observed discreetly, from the back corner of the room, so that neither students nor teachers would feel intimidated.

Data amount

About two, 45-minute lessons for the same age group of learners (twelve-/thirteen-year-olds) were observed by two observers at twelve secondary schools in Tbilisi. About 20 hours of lesson observation data from 26 classes were collected.

9.2.5 Data analysis

Data Processing

All the data from the observation forms was entered into SPSS. All the indepen-dent variables ('school type', 'age', 'teaching experience', 'the level of under-standing of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT') were coded numerically according to the defined categories (see Section 9.2.2 above).

Recoding

To allow for a consistent and clear comparison of the teachers' attitude scores towards CLT (see Section 7.2.6) with the observation results, the differing measurement scales which had been applied in the cases of the Teacher Questionnaires (1-5) and Lesson Observation (1-3) had to be evened out: the observation scores originally presented on a scale from 1 to 3 were recoded into a comparable score on a scale of 1 to 5, using the *Recode* function in SPSS.

Composite scores

Composite scores for each thematic group on the observation form (41 obser-vation items grouped into seven groups) were calculated through the *Transform* function in SPSS. This manipulation allowed the reporting of the analysis results in a more compact and feasible manner, and contributed to identifying broader language classroom practice patterns.

Validity and reliability

Before running any other tests to further explore the data obtained through the observations, the internal reliability of the observation form items was tested.. There is not a generally agreed values for Cronbach's Alpha, and researchers'opinions vary with regard to what a respectable level of inter-item reliability should be (Huck, 2009; De Vellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978). In the case of exploratory studies, Cronbach's Alpha values of ≥ 0.60 have been

considered acceptable (Hair et al., 1998). Thus, for the present study, the detected level of .666 inter-item reliability was considered acceptable.

Inter-rater reliability

To ensure the reliability of the assessments by myself and my co-observer, the English language lesson evaluation data provided by us were compared to verify their validity. No major discrepancies were found between the evaluation results. Minor variations were discussed and consensus was reached. An inter-rater reliability of .86 (Cohen's kappa) was found using SPSS.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

In order to discover how CLT-oriented language teaching at the schools in Tbilisi is (RQ1), first, frequency counts and descriptive statistics tests were conducted on the original observation variables, which allowed a close observation of the raw data derived from language classroom observations and a calculation of the mean scores (see Appendices 9.2 and 9.3). Next, to obtain a more general picture and make the extensive data presentable to the reader, all further statistical analyses were conducted on the composite scores of multiple items grouped into the CLT-related thematic groups (see Section 9.2.4). The same procedure was followed with regard to the Challenges part of the observation (Research Question 2).

To check the effect of the independent variables – 'school type', 'teacher age' and 'experience', as well as the teachers' 'level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT' – on teachers' classroom performance (RQ3), an ANOVA test was conducted. As the assumptions that had been made of homogeneity of variance (checked with Levene's Test) and data distribution normality underlying ANOVA were not quite met, an adjusted F test: the Brown-Forsythe statistic, which is more tolerant of such violations, had to be used in SPSS. To detect where exactly the between-group difference lay, follow-up post-hoc analysis tests were applied. Again, as the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not quite satisfied (equal variances not assumed), the more robust Tamhane's T2 test was used instead of the commoner Bonferroni or Scheffe alternatives available in SPSS.

To analyze the inter-item relationship among the dependent variables (teachers' performance scores across different CLT thematic groups (RQ1) as well as between the independent variables and dependent variables (RQ3), a Pearson's Correlation test was conducted. The significance level for all statistical tests applied in this research was set at .05. For more information regarding the data analysis approach adopted in this study, see Section 7. 2.5.

9.3 STUDY RESULTS

In this section I will discuss the results of data analysis, focusing on each research question in turn.

Research question 1: *How CLT-oriented is the language teaching process at secondary schools in Tbilisi?*

While observing the classes, in the first place, it was attempted to determine what the ultimate goal of the lesson was: teaching about language forms or developing communicative skills in learners. Table 9.4 below presents the information obtained about the focus of the lessons observed and the nature of teaching method applied to achieve the study goals.

Table 9.4: The main focus of the 26 lessons observed at the twelve schools and the communicative nature of the lessons

Lesson focus	Frequency	Percentage	Method applied in the lesson
Form/Linguistic Knowledge	17	65.4%	Non-communicative
Skills/Communicative Competence	9	34.6%	6 quasi-comminicative 3 genuinely communicative
Total	26	100%	

As the data in Table 9.4 shows, in the majority of cases, it is mostly language knowledge provision that was the focus of the language lesson, and there were nine cases when the focus of the lesson was on communicative skills development. Even though teaching of language form is one of the main aims of Communicative Language Teaching, the fact that the majority of lessons were grammar-driven, and very similar to the ones practised in Soviet times under the Grammar-Translation method, indicates that teachers have a strong tendency, for whatever reason, to focus on language form, largely ignoring the language areas which provide the abilities necessary for efficient communication. Also, besides what is focused on in the language lesson, it is equally important to determine which approach is used in the process of teaching. Language form/grammar can easily be taught using a communicative method; it is not only what but also how one teaches that matters, and a description of the latter follows below (see Table 9.6).

Besides the lesson focus, the main source of teaching material of the lessons observed was also investigated ('with what'). All of the teachers observed except two (T01: Pri. C.; T02: Pri. C.)[6] demonstrated a sole reliance on the coursebooks adopted by their schools as their teaching material. The

[6] A clarification of the coding system applied was provided in Section 7.2.5.

table below provides information about the coursebook titles, publishers and the place of publication:

Table 9.5: English coursebooks used at secondary schools in Tbilisi

Coursebook Title:	Publisher:	Country of Origin:
Total English	Macmillan	UK
English World	Macmillan	UK
Laser	Macmillan	UK
Gate Way	Macmillan	UK
Success	Pearson/Longman	UK
Friends	Oxford University Press	UK
Top Score	Oxford University Press	UK
New English Plus	Twenty-first Century	Georgia

As it can be observed in the table, the coursebooks used at secondary schools in Georgia, in almost all cases, except for one (Public Peripheral school), were British-published resources, and were on the list of teaching materials approved for classroom use by the Ministry of Education of Georgia (for more information regarding coursebook approval procedures in Georgia, see 5.4.2). This also suggests that it is mainly the British English that is practised at schools in Georgia; however, it should also be noted that little else besides the employment of British-published teaching materials is indicative of which norm of English is tried to be promoted in Georgia (for more discussion on the topic, see Section 5.4.4).

The methodology adopted in the coursebooks listed in the table above is clearly of a communicative character and follows the language teaching, learning and assessment standards outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), elaborated by the Council of Europe; however, this does not automatically mean that the lessons in which these materials are used are actually of a communicative nature. Thus, it was deemed interesting to look into whether the methodologies used in the English language lessons were compatible with the ones suggested by the coursebook authors.

The teachers' actual classroom performance and the closeness of their practices to CLT principles was explored by rating the communicative character of their practices according to the six thematic groups presented in the observation for (the seventh group – CLT-related challenges was analyzed separately) . The detailed results of the frequency counts and mean score calculations for each observation item can be found in Appendices 9.2 and 9.3. The results obtained from the descriptive statistics tests run on the composite variables of the CLT-related thematic groups are provided in Table 9.6 below:

Table 9.6: Degree of CLT-orientation of teachers' teaching practice

Methodology thematic groups	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
1. Language and Learning Theory	1	5	2.08	1.168
2. Course Design and Syllabus	1	4	1.82	1.055
3. Teacher's and Learner's Roles	1	5	2.62	1.359
4. Classroom Interaction	1	5	2.15	1.317
5. Error Correction	1	5	2.15	1.300
6. Teaching Materials and Activities	1	5	2.12	1.251
Mean:	1	5	2.16	1.152

Note: The mean scores for groups 1-6 are presented on a scale of 1-5(1=not communicative at all; 5=highly communicative).
Note: Min.=Minimum; Max.=Maximum, SD=Standard Deviation.

The mean scores presented in Table 9.6 illustrate that, overall, the communicative nature of the lessons in Georgia are rated below average across all thematic groups, ranging from M=1.82 to M=2.62 on a 5 point scale. However, the large variability of the scores gives grounds to assume that certain factors might be affecting the analysis outcomes to a significant degree. Hence, further analysis in the direction of independent variable effect has been undertaken and the results are reported below in Figures 9.1 and 9.2 describing the effects of 'school type', 'teacher age', 'teacher'experience' and 'level of understanding of CLT theory'.

To check the relationship between the observation groups, an inter-item correlation analysis was conducted. The test revealed a positive correlation between the thematic groups, which means that those teachers who demonstrate more CLT orientation in one area of teaching do so across all other categories: those who scored higher than others, for instance, with regard to Error Correction techniques also scored higher in the Classroom Interaction area. The details of the correlation analysis can be found in the Table below:

Table 9.7: Inter-item correlation analysis: observation scales 1–7

		1. Language and Learning Theory	2. Course Design and Syllabus	3. Teacher's and Learner's Roles	4. Classroom Interaction	5. Error Correction	6. Teaching Materials and Activities	7. CLT-related Challenges
1. Language and Learning Theory	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
2. Course Design and Syllabus	Pearson Correlation	.775**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
3. Teacher's and Learner's Roles	Pearson Correlation	.895**	.796**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000					
4. Classroom Interaction	Pearson Correlation	.918**	.807**	.895**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000				
5. Error Correction	Pearson Correlation	.800**	.552**	.812**	.803**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.000	.000			
6. Teaching Materials and Activities	Pearson Correlation	.924**	.693**	.839**	.850**	.783**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
7. CLT-related Challenges	Pearson Correlation	-.933**	-.814**	-.839**	-.869**	-.673**	-.900**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

My observations with regard to the true nature of the language teaching methodology applied in the classrooms in Tbilisi are well llustrated by the qualitative assessments of an American teacher assistant, who had arrived in Georgia on a Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG) program (for more information about the program, see Section 5.4.4), and whom I met in one of the lessons at one of the Public Central school in Tbilisi.

In his interview, the teacher emphasized the excessive focus on the forms of the language and on accuracy, and negligence regarding the meaning of the English language, by the Georgian teachers. The issue of the lack of understanding of the theoretical background to CLT, as well as the strong

prevalence of the old-fashioned way of language teaching, also surfaced in the interview. An excerpt from the interview follows below:

> Grammar instruction takes up the most of the teaching time. I have been speaking English for ages and studied linguistics too, but this is the first time I have heard so many details about conditionals, passive voice and about so many other grammar structures. These are arbitrary constructions, which do not measure how one uses the language; sometimes pupils intuitively use the correct language forms, but teachers correct them if the structure they use does not fit the provided framework. This seems so awkward to me… as for the activities, there is nothing communicative or native-like about them; it is just a recitation and a bad recitation too (T21: Pub. C.)

The teacher also talked about the lack of authentic language exposure opportunities in language classrooms in Georgia, as the teachers having no contact with the natively-spoken language, and cannot offer a good language model to the students, nor are such experiences offered to the learners by exploiting the resources that modern technologies can offer nowadays and by doing so, provide certain solutions to the problem (T21: Pub. C.).

Research question 2: *What are the practical challenges encountered on the way to CLT application in language classrooms in Georgia?*

To reveal the level of challenge associated with CLT implementation in the language classrooms in Georgia, the observation items dealing with CLT-related issues (Group 7, items 27–41 on the observation form) were analyzed through frequency counts (Appendix 9.2) and descriptive statistics (Table 9.8). To make the source of a particular challenge clearer, the items in the Challenges section of the questionnaire were further subdivided into 'Teacher-related challenges', 'Learner-related Challenges' and 'Other Challenges' groups. Table 9.8 presents the analysis results:

Table 9.8: Mean scores of the challenges observed in the English language lessons

CLT-related challenges	Mean
Teacher-related challenges	**Mean: 3.56**
Teachers are not proficient in the target foreign language	3.62
Teachers do not seem to be aware of CLT principles	3.77
Teachers do not seem to be trained in using CLT	3.19
The influence of the grammar-driven way of teaching is felt in class	3.69
Learner-related challenges	**Mean: 1.52**
Learners do not seem willing to speak out and be active in the lesson	1.08
Learners seem uncomfortable speaking with each other in a foreign lang uage	1.31
Dealing with learners of various language proficiencies	1.77
Learners are having difficulties learning in the medium of the foreign language	1.92
Other CLT-related Challenges	**Mean: 3.3**
The large group size of students seems to be complicating the study process	3.08
There are classroom management problems related to CLT practices	2.69
There are not enough classroom facilities and equipment to support CLT	4.00
The classroom is arranged in such a way that it does not support CLT	3.00
The non-CLT compatible assessment system	3.92
Mean	**2.80**

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1-5 (1=no challenge, 2=little challenge, 3=moderate challenge, 4=considerable challenge, 5=very big ch allenge).

The data presented in Table 9.8 indicate that the overall level of typical CLT-related challenges was above average (*M*=2.80). However, when observed in various categories, it is revealed that the degree of learner-related challenges are quite low (Composite Mean=1.52), whereas teacher-related (Composite Mean=3.56) and CLT-related (Composite Mean=3.3) issues were considerable; a low awareness of a theoretical background of CLT, low language proficiency, the prevalence of the grammar-driven way of language teaching, the need for teacher training, and together with the lack of teaching facilities, large classes, seem to be much more problematic than learner-related issues are. More statistical details of the challenges observed in the lessons (questionnaire items 27–39), can be found in Appendices 9.2.

Research question 3: *Do factors such as school type as well as certain teacher characteristics affect the communicative nature of their classroom practice?*

ANOVA and post-hoc analyses were conducted to check the effects of the independent variables on the communicative nature of teachers' classroom practice. The calculations were performed in SPSS on the composite scores of the observation results. The results of the analysis are provided in Table 9.9 below (more detailed statistics of the observation outcomes are presented in Appendix 9.4).

Table 9.9: Effects of the independent variables on the communicative nature of the teachers' classroom practice

Variables	Groups	Mean scores
School type	Public Central	1.59
	Public Peripheral	1.50
	Private Central	3.98
	Private Peripheral	2.46
Age	25-34	4.08
	35-44	2.60
	45-54	1.65
	54-65	1.56
Teaching experience	Over 5 years	2.98
	Over 10 years	1.68
	Over 20 years	1.38
Level of understanding of CLT underpinnings	Has no understanding	1.37
	Has partial understanding	2.46
	Has full understanding	3.92

The effect of the 'school type' variable turned out to be significant [F(3, 22)=17.6 4, *p.*=.000]; the analysis revealed that the teachers at Private Central schools tend to be significantly more CLT-oriented than their Public Central (*p.*=.000) and Public Peripheral (*p.*=.000) school colleagues. As for the effect of 'age' [F(3,22)=4.86,
p.=.010], the youngest age group (25-35) performed in a significantly more communicative manner than their older colleagues belonging to the 45-55 (*p.*=.050) and 55-65 age groups (*p.*=.018) did. This fact confirms the tendency of younger teachers to be more CLT-oriented than their older colleagues. The analysis of the effects of 'experience' [F(2, 23)=5.54, *p.*=.009] reveals an interesting pattern: the teachers with the least teaching experience tend to demonstrate practice closest to the CLT principles, and the teachers with the longest experience the least. In terms of the significance of the differences

detected across the groups, the 'over 5 years of experience' group demonstrated significantly more CLT-oriented classroom practices compared with the 'over 10 years of experience' (*p.*=.032) and 'over 20 years of experience' (*p.*=.010) groups. This finding, coupled with the results of an ANOVA test on the 'teacher age' variable, indicates that the older language teachers in Georgia are and the earlier they start teaching, the greater the chances that they will employ non-CLT method of teaching in the class.

It was also deemed important to cross-reference to the analysis results presented in Section 7.3.1 (also in Table 7.9) regarding the teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, and explore the effect of this factor on the teachers' actual teaching performance; the effect size proved to be significant [F(2, 23) =34.33, *p.*=.000]. The results presented in Table 9.9 above indicate, as expected, the group with the highest level of understanding performed in the most CLT-oriented manner, whereas the group of teachers with the lowest understanding acted in the least CLT-compatible mannder. Significant differences were found between the group with 'no understanding' on the one hand, and the groups with 'partial understanding' (*p.*=.046) and 'full understanding' (*p.*=.010), on the other, and the teachers with a highest awareness of the theory underlying CLT demonstrating a significantly more CLT-compatible teaching style than the other two groups.

How the above described independent variables affect the level of challenge attached to CLT implementation was also investigated. 'School type', as well as all the other teacher-related variables included in this study proved to have the similar effect on the challenge degree as on the communicative nature of the classroom practice. At private school teachers faced significantly fewer challenges than their public school counterparts (F(2, 23)=26.81, *p.*=.000; for more detailed statistics, see Appendix 9.5). The effect of the age was also significant [F(2, 23) =4.48, *p.*=.013) – the younger the teachers were, the greater the ease with which they applied CLT in their actual teaching, with the teachers belonging to the 25-35 age group being significantly more at ease with CLT application than the 45-55 (*p.*=.025) and 55-65 (*p.*=.044) age group representatives. It was also revealed that long teaching experience does not make teachers any more efficient at using CLT than their less experienced colleagues, on the contrary, the teachers with the least experience seemed to be facing the fewest challenges [F(2, 23)=7.12, *p.*=.004], with a significant difference between the 'over five years of experience' and 'over ten years of experience' teacher groups (*p.*=.003). As for how accurate knowledge of the theory underlying a teaching method helps with overcoming the practical challenges, the analysis revealed that teachers with no understanding of the theoretical background of CLT tend to face significantly more problems while tea-ching than teachers with a full or at least a partial understanding of the theoretical principles.

Research question 4: *Are there any discrepancies between teachers' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching, and their actual teaching practice?*

Even though the investigation of the teachers' attitudes towards CLT, described in Chapters 7, revealed a widely positive predisposition on the teachers' part (see Section 7.3.2, Table 7.11), it turned out that, in the vast majority of cases, their actual practice does not exactly reflect their degree of communicativeness: 23 out of the 26 classes observed were assessed as being non-communicative or only partly communicative, and oriented at teaching only the language form. Since the data in the present and Study 1(Chapter 7) were generated in non-comparable ways, no statistical analysis was conducted here; however, for general comparison purposes, these data were juxtaposed and are presented in Figures 9.1 and 9.2 below.

Figure 9.1 below compares, across the range of CLT-related thematic groups, how teachers feel about CLT and to what extent they implement this method in their actual teaching practice. In summary, the comparison indicates that there is a notable discrepancy between the teachers' attitudes towards CLT and the communicative character of their actual teaching practice. The teachers are visibly more receptive and supportive of CLT at the theoretical than at the practical level: despite their highly positive attitude towards CLT principles, this is not usually reflected in their lessons, which are far from being genuinely communicative in nature.

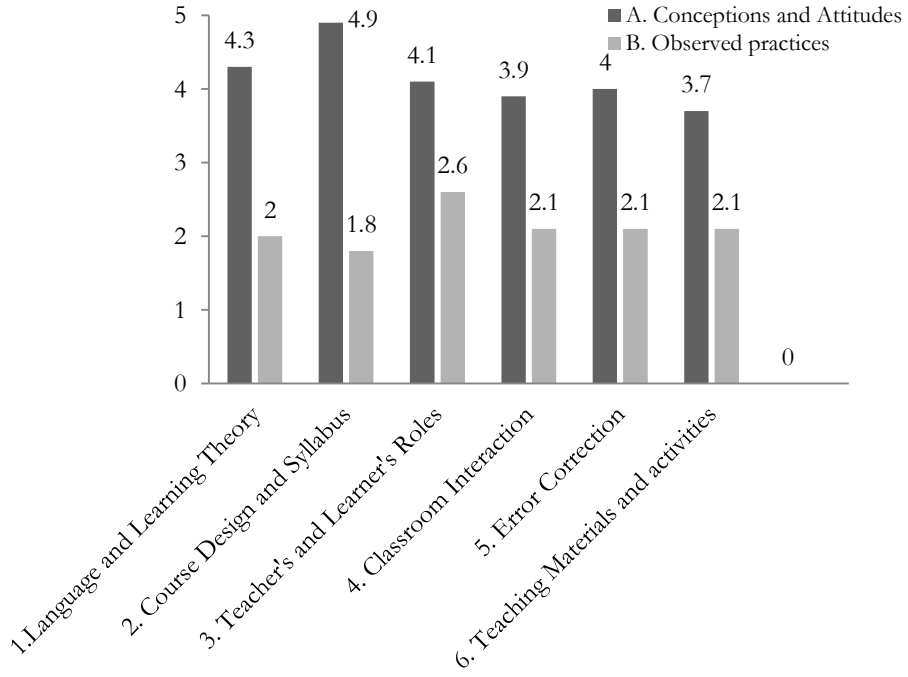

Figure 9.1: Discrepancy between the teachers' conceptions and attitudes towards CLT and the communicative nature of their actual teaching[7]

A look at how the level of the above discussed discrepancy would change when looked at across various school types was also considered interesting. As a result of comparing the data, visible differences were detected in this respect as well. The results are presented in Figure 9.2 below.

[7] The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1–5.

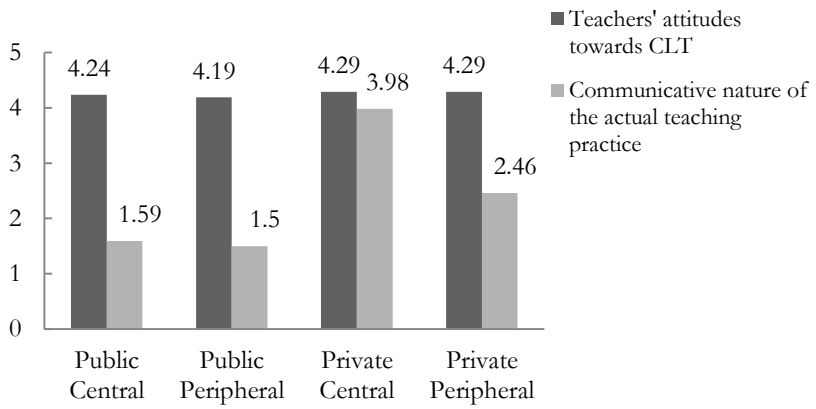

Figure 9.2: Comparison of teachers' attitudes towards CLT and their classroom practice across different school types

The level of discrepancy between the teachers' attitudes and their classroom practice looks dramatic in the case of publis schools; the difference is also visible in Private Peripheral schools, but minimal in Private Central ones. Thus, the comparison reveals that private school teachers, and in particular Private Central ones, are better able to realize their teaching methodology preferences than their public school counterparts.

The discrepancy between declared and observed CLT-related challenges was also explored and the results of the analysis are provided in the Figure below:

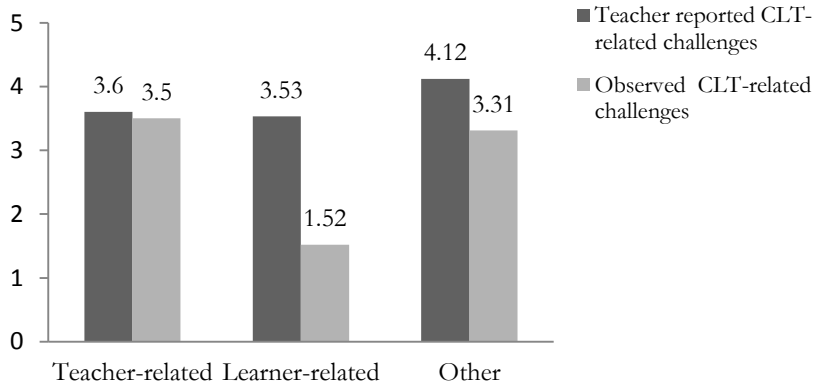

Figure 9.3: Comparison of reported and observed challenges

As the data reveals, only in the category 'learner-related difficulties' was the observed mismatch notable, which means that in that category teachers

attribute more problems to language learners in the process of CLT than was actually witnessed in the lessons, whereas about the same level of difficulty was attached to the categories of 'teacher-related' and 'other challenges' by the observers as well as the teachers themselves.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS

The current study was aimed at assessing the communicative nature of the teaching/learning process, at detecting discrepancies between how teachers feel about CLT and what they actually produce in their lessons, and at identifying the challenges that might be forming obstacles on the way to efficient implementation of CLT at secondary schools in Tbilisi. A total of 26 language classes were observed at both public and private secondary schools. The research questions posed at the beginning of the chapter will be addressed below.

1. Communicative nature of language classes in Tbilisi

In the CLT literature two aspects of CLT are focused upon: what to teach and how to teach (Littlewood, 1982; Harmer, 2001). As far as the issue of what to teach is concerned, as a result of the observations of the current study, it was detected that at all but one (Public Peripheral) type of secondary schools foreign-published, CLT-methodology-based coursebooks were used (see Table 9.5).

As far as the methodology of exploiting these materials is concerned (how to teach), the Georgian teachers of English revealed a tendency to adapt the resources to their personal teaching circumstances and competences, evidence of which is revealed in the fact that even though the coursebooks are highly communicative in nature, the majority of teachers observed (17 out of 26) focused on grammar, skipping listening and speaking activities altogether (see Table 9.4), as well as delivering the available communication-oriented material in a non-communicative manner. Here, it is also noteworthy to observe that it is precisely listening and speaking skills that are believed to be most essential for efficient communication purposes. Neither a sufficient level of focus on language functions, nor the natural use of the target language, nor a sufficient quantity of fluency and Communicative Competence-oriented work was observed in the lessons. CLT-compatible forms of error correction, classroom interaction patterns, teaching material that is authentic in nature – none of these were strongly evident in these classes. Only a few classes were partly communicative in nature (6 classes) – where some principles of CLT could be discerned in the lessons; however, the lessons still bore a quasi-communicative character, employing quasi-communicative activities, interaction patterns and techniques. Solely 3 classes (out of 26) were found to be genuinely communicative (see Table 9.4) – focusing not only on grammar and language

accuracy, but also language skills and the development of the communicative competence in the learners, as well as successfully employing truly communicative teaching patterns and principles.

The situation in language classes in Tbilisi described in the present study does not differ much from the one reported in a similar study by Tkemaladze et al. undertaken in 2001. The study by Tkemaladze indicates that, in spite of the claim of most of the teachers with regard to the communicative nature of their teaching practice, observations of 148 classes proved the opposite: "no instances of communicative activities were conducted. Priority was entirely given to language accuracy as opposed to students' Communicative Competence," Berulava reports (2001:29). Moreover, she adds that in a forty-minute lesson, only five minutes were devoted to fluency practice and 35 minutes to accuracy-oriented activities (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:112). So, it can be concluded that even though a few classes bearing a communicative character were observed in the present study, the situation overall in language teaching has not changed considerably since 2001 till today in Georgia.

2. Practical challenges encountered on the way to the application of CLT in language classes in Georgia

Most of the typical challenges associated with CLT application in EFL contexts, such as China or Japan, (Kavanagh, 2012; Li, 1998; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Ellis, 1994), were also found at the secondary schools in Tbilisi. The most significant degree of challenge was related to teachers (Composite Mean=3.6),[8] followed by other CLT-related difficulties (Composite Mean=3.4); the learners proved to be significantly less problematic agents (Composite Mean=1.5) of the communicative teaching/learning process (see Table 9.8).

3. Effects of 'school type' as well as certain teacher-related variables on the communicative character of their classroom teaching

Significant differences were detected across the various teaching contexts as well as across groups of teachers with varying characteristics.

School type

The degree of communicative character of language teaching in Georgia proved to be the highest at Private Central schools, the difference being significant between Private Central schools on the one hand, and Public Central and Public Peripheral types, on the other (see Table 9.9). These results concur with some other results of the studies conducted in other EFL-implementing countries (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006:162).

[15]The mean score is presented on a scale of 1–5.

Age and experience

As for the age and experience, younger teachers, with less teaching experience, performed in a significantly more CLT-compatible manner than their older colleagues. In regard to the challenges, here too, younger and less experienced teachers were observed to face significantly fewer problems in implementing CLT in the classroom than older teachers with a longer teaching background (see Figures 9.2 and 9.3).

Level of understanding of CLT underpinnings

How teachers understand the theoretical underpinnings of CLT is believed to be a very important factor for an efficient implementation of CLT in the classroom (Kavanagh, 2012; Sakui, 2004; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Mulligan, 2005). The present study revealed a strong correlation between teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT and their classroom performance, which implies that the more aware the teachers in Georgia are of the theory, the deeper and more accurate their understanding of the methodology is, and the more capable they are of acting in accordance with CLT principles (see Table 9.9). This finding is further confirmed by the fact that the group of teachers with the lowest level of such understanding demonstrated a significantly less CLT-oriented teaching manner and faced significantly more challenges in the process of CLT teaching than did teachers belonging to the group with less extensive understanding of the theories behind CLT (see Section 9.3).

4. Discrepancies between teachers' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching and their actual teaching practice

A discrepancy was detected between the teachers' classroom practice and their attitudes towards CLT (see Figure 9.1). The impression that emerged from the comparison is that there is little evidence of a strong link between language policy, language teachers' attitudes and the language classroom reality at secondary schools in Georgia. As in other EFL contexts (Savignon, 2002; Mangubhai et al., 2004), in Georgia as well, neither the officially advocated strong orientation towards a more communicative approach to language teaching, nor the highly positive disposition that teachers have towards CLT, is necessarily reflected in the actual classroom practice, which, in Georgia's case, is still characterized by a largely form-focused orientation. This low correlation between what teachers state and their classroom practice is a further proof of the existence of a gap between theory and practice with respect to CLT in Georgia which needs to be bridged.

However, comparison of the level of discrepancy between teachers' attitudes to CLT and their actual performance across various school types

yielded notably distinct results: while the mismatch between the teachers' attitudes and classroom teaching at all public schools is considerable, at private schools the discrepancy level is quite low, or even minimal in the case of Private Central schools (see Figure 9.2). This can be explained by the fact that, as was revealed in the study, the teachers at private schools have a much more profound understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT and face many fewer barriers for CLT implementation than public school teachers do. This makes the possibility of 'practicing' what the teachers preach' much more likely.

As for the mismatch between the challenges reported by the teachers and the challenges actually observed in the lessons, it was not significant except for the difficulty that was attached to the learners – in this respect, teachers tended to accuse learners of causing more problems in the CLT implementation process than they actually were (see Figure 9.3). The insignificant discrepancy reported in the cases of teacher-related challenges and administration/CLT-related challenges is illustrative of the fact that the teachers are well capable of perceiving self-related as well as other kinds of difficulties impeding the successful implementation of CLT.

To conclude, although the importance of having positive attitudes towards a modernized teaching methodology should not be underestimated, the practical aspect is of equal significance in the process of the implementation of change (Kavanagh, 2012; Thompson, 1996). The efforts made at the policy level are not always enough and do not guarantee successful or efficient teaching practice (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Thornbury, 2006); there is much literature on how, in many cases, pedagogical or methodological innovations and reforms often fail to be realized in actual classrooms (Coskun, 2011; Kurihara & Samimy, 2007). Thus, it is recommended that more account be taken of the practicalities related to CLT implementation in Georgia, as it is the practical side of things that seems to be causing most problems in the process. This finding is in line with similar results from a neighbouring country, Turkey (Coskun, 2011:6). Other factors, as revealed through various studies that are blamed for impeding a successful implementation of CLT include local educational theories, teachers' adherence to tradition, a cultural reluctance to challenge written words, as well as a focus on grammar-driven examination system (Coskun, 2011:8).

The following and the final analysis Chapter 10 also explores the practical side of things – the actual communicative proficiency of Georgian learners of English. This investigation is meant to measure the success level achieved so far by efforts undertaken by the Government of Georgia in the direction of transforming traditional, already-outdated methods and goals of language teaching into a modernized, communicative experience.

CHAPTER 10: LEARNERS' COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH (STUDY 4)

"We thus make a fundamental distinction between the competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)"

Noam Chomsky (1965: 3)

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The study presented in this chapter concludes the description of the language policy transfer cycle outlined in the introduction of this dissertation (Figure 1.1) – it aimes at exploring how the proposed language policy (as described in Chapter 6) in Georgia, influenced by the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards and understanding of it, as well as affected by the practicalities of classroom teaching, has an actual bearing upon the language learners' communicative proficiency in English.

Chapter overview

The remainder of this section (10.1.1) clarifies the terminology related to language knowledge and abilities in order to provide more clarity for the data analysis and discussion presented later in the chapter. The research questions of this study are also formulated in this section (10.1.2). Section 10.2 discusses the research methodology, whereas Section 10.3 reports the results of the learners' communicative proficiency analysis (10.3.1) as well as the comparison of the main results of all four studies (10.3.2). In Section 10.4 the summary of the present study outcomes and the concluding comments are provided.

10.1.1 Discussion of terminology relevant to the present study

When seeking to assess learners' success in acquiring a foreign language, it is important that the right decisions are made with regard to what should be measured and in what form, and that the decisions are based upon a clear understanding of the notions involved in this domain. There has been a long debate regarding the exact meaning of the linguistic terms related to learners' underlying and manifested forms of language knowledge (Llurda, 2000:85), namely, what exactly 'linguistic knowledge', 'language competence', 'language skills', 'language proficiency' and 'language performance' mean, and how these concepts differ from one another. Thus, to provide more clarity for the discussion later on in this chapter, it is important to determine the exact scope of the language knowledge-related linguistic terminology used in this study.

Linguistic knowledge and linguistic competence

Krashen (1982:10) spoke of linguistic knowledge as of the conscious knowledge of language rules and grammar ('knowledge *about* the language'). He attributed 'linguistic knowledge' to the field of linguistics, and referred to it as a component not necessary in the process of natural language acuquisition, which he considered to be a much more efficient way of studying a second language than conscious learning of language rules, even in the post-puberty period. It was the growing realization that "having a perfect knowledge of linguistic forms and grammatical accuracy in the L2 does not necessarily constitute competence in oral verbal communication" that contributed to the elaboration of a more "integrated" form of language proficiency assessment (Pillar, 2011:1).

As for the term 'linguistic competence', this concept has caused much confusion and debate: for some, it means the mastery of the forms of the language (Chomsky 1965), its only difference from 'linguistic knowledge' being its intuitive character. According to Gregg (1989:20), "the term generally employed for one's linguistic knowledge (innate or acquired) is *competence*" (see also Saville-Troike, 2006:198); others argue that competence in a language equates with "the ability for use" (Llurda, 2000:86), taking account of the social contexts and norms of language as well (Hymes, 1972; Canale and Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1982; Bachman, 1990). To highlight the communicative value of the term, Hymes (1972) used an adjective to modify it and created a new name for this concept – 'communicative competence', which expressed the social and communicative value of the notion in a better way (Llurda, 2000:86; see also Section 3.3.3). According to Saville-Troike (2006) 'communicative competence' means "everything that a speaker needs to know in order to communicate appropriately within a particular community" (2006:134).

Linguistic skill and language proficiency

In opposition to the Chomskian interpretation of 'linguistic competence', some researchers equate the concept with 'linguistic skill', claiming that 'linguistic competence' can be learnt or taught like any other skill, and that it is a competence in permanent progress and transformation (Corder, 1973:126; Bruner, 1973:111). Others perceive 'linguistic skill' as something that is required for the manifestation of 'communicative competence' (Saville-Troike, 2006:136; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980:190), the assumption that is adopted in the present study. 'Linguistic skill' as a term is also equated with 'proficiency' by Llurda; however, the differentiating character implicit in the term 'proficiency' is that of constant "variability" and its association with measurement and testing in second-language teaching and learning (Llurda, 2000:88-89). Thus, 'linguistic proficiency' can be considered to be a term finding itself in-between Chomskian 'competence' and 'performance' (see the following paragraph), and

as referring to "the ability to make use of competence" or an "ability to use a language" (Taylor, 1988:166). According to Stern (1983), the term 'proficiency' can be interpreted from two different perspectives: by looking at the "levels of proficiency", from lower to higher, on the one hand, and that of the "components of proficiency", on the other, the different language areas of which overall language proficiency is comprised (Stern, 1983:357; Llurda, 2000:89).

Linguistic performance

The actual process of application of the language knowledge and/or language competence through certain language skills is referred to as 'linguistic performance' (Chomsky, 1967; Widdowson, 2004; Richards, 2011). To Widdowson, 'linguistic performance' means "language knowledge put into effect as behaviour" (2004:3); as for Saville-Troike, he defines linguistic performance as "the use of language knowledge in actual production" (2006:191).

Despite the fact that there exist several alternatives for and controversy over the use of an accurate term, in the present study it was decided to adopt the term 'communicative proficiency' to denote language learners' communicative abilities demonstrated through speaking.

10.1.2 Research questions

Based on the purpose and the problem focused upon in the present study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How communicatively proficient are the learners of English at the secondary schools in Tbilisi?
2. To what extent is the learners' communicative proficiency affected by 'school type' as well as certain learner-related factors?

10.2 METHODOLOGY[1]

10.2.1 Research design

The present study has a between-groups design: the results of learners' oral proficiency assessment are presented as dependent variables, whereas 'school type', 'length of language teaching in school', 'exposure to extracurricular language learning', and 'sex' are included as independent variables.

[1] For the definitions of the statistical terms used in this as well as other chapters of this study, see the Statistics Reference Page above.

School type

A detailed discussion on what effect 'school type' might have on the present study outcomes may be found in 7.2.1.

Length of English language teaching in school

Independent variables which are believed to affect the language proficiency level of learners were also included in this study. As the grade when language instruction starts at secondary schools in Georgia can vary from school to school as well as between the public and private sectors, it was thought useful to check whether the possible differences in the length of prior English language teaching enjoyed by pupils at a school had a significant effect on their language performance. Two groups were formed within this variable: learners with 'under five years of language learning' and learners with 'five years or more language learning'.

Exposure to extracurricular language learning

Supplementing the education received in schools with extra language instruction through private language teachers as well as language centers has been common practice in Georgia. Recently, with much wider travel opportunities, greater information availability as well as communication possibilities, learners have gained access to valuable sources of extracurricular teaching, among them increased foreign language learning opportunities. Taking the above considerations into account, a need appears evident to explore whether learners' existing level of language proficiency is a direct and simple function of the language instruction they get in school or is rather a combination of that with other learning opportunities outside school. Consequently, the factor 'exposure to extracurricular language learning' was included as an independent variable in the design of the present study, within which four further categories were considered: 'no exposure', 'private teacher', 'private language school', and 'exposure to native environment/native-speaker teacher'.

Sex

As there is much discussion and controversy regarding whether the factor sex, in general, affects the research outcomes or not, it was believed to be interesting to look into sex-related differences with regard to learners' communicative proficiency in a foreign language in the context of the present study as well.

10.2.2 Study participants

The participants approached in the present study constituted part of the same learner population as the one described for the study in Chapter 8 (see 8.2.3). Table 10.1 below summarizes the participants' background.

Table 10.1: Participants' distribution according to different school types and certain learner-related factors

Variables	Groups	Number of students (N=65)
School type	Public Central	23
	Public Peripheral	20
	Private Central	11
	Private Peripheral	11
Learner sex	Female	32
	Male	33
Learner age	12	27
	13	37
	14	1
Length of education (years)	2-3	5
	4-5	10
	6-8	50
English outside school	None	25
	private tutor	32
	private language center	6
	non-native speaking environment	2

An almost identical distribution was detected with regard to the randomly selected participant sex: 33 (50.8%) male and 32 (49.2%) female learners participated in the study. The participant age group was restricted to the 12–14-year-olds. As far as the length of exposure to language teaching in school is concerned, an average length of six years was detected. As for the learners' outside school language learning, more than half the number of participants (62%) had received some form of external language instruction, in the majority of the cases (49%) through a private tutor. A slightly smaller group had had no extra language instruction, and only a few participants had been exposed to language learning experiences through a private language center or in a native speaking environment.

Incentives to participate

Permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education of Georgia as well as from the individual school administrations before approaching the secondary school learners in Tbilisi. All the participants approached agreed to participate in the study. The speech recording procedure, which was conducted by myself and an assistant, was completed without any reported complaints. A confidentiality guarantee was provided to the school administrations that the recorded data would not be made public.

10.2.3 Data collection tools

Since the general framework of this study is Communicative Language Teaching, which is based upon the theory of Communicative Competence, an assessment approach had to be adopted for the present study be based on the principles of communicative competence as well.

There has been much discussion regarding the relevant form of assessment of learners' Communicative Competence. Communicative Competence, consisting of linguistic and discourse as well as strategic and socio-cultural (paralinguistic) components (see Section 3.3.3), is believed to be much more difficult to test than theoretical language knowledge as it measures linguistic as well as paralinguistic skills (Pillar, 2011: 4). According to Chambers and Richards (1992:8), "it is unlikely that all components [of communicative competence] can be assessed at once at any level by any task, or given equal importance" (for more information on communicative competence assessment-related challenges, see Section 3.10.4). According to Savignon (2002:4), learners' overall Communicative Competence, the development of which constitutes the goal of CLT, requires "global, qualitative assessment of learners' achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete linguistic features", which is a testing form commonly associated with form-focused approaches to foreign language teaching.

Thus, two types of testing are differentiated in the literature: "indirect, discrete-point testing" and "direct, integrated testing" (Di Nicuolo, 1991:143; Ingram, 1985:247). Whereas the former measures the learner's cognitive language proficiency with one component at a time, the latter is concerned with assessing learners' overall language proficiency in a more "holistic" manner (Savignon, 2002:4; Ingram, 1985:247). As the opponents of discrete testing argue, such tests measure only one component of language proficiency (knowledge or skills), in which case making a generalized assumption about the overall language knowledge is not possible. As for the integrated approach to language proficiency testing, Ingram describes such tests as follows:

> Direct tests focus directly on the learners' proficiency as demonstrated in the way he carries out actual communication tasks and proficiency statements are

> made in terms of the learner's actual language behaviour. Learners are rated by being matched against the level on a scale consisting of a series of proficiency descriptors that best describe their language behaviour. In other words, direct tests are criterion-referenced or edumetric tests (Ingram, 1985:247).

It has also been argued that the best possible way to access learners' overall language proficiency is through productive rather than receptive skills; to be more precise, integrated language testing is mainly associated with oral proficiency or conversational ability checking (Saville-Troike, 2006:147). It is oral communication through which both linguistic as well as paralinguistic communication abilities can be assessed (Pillar, 2011:3) and it is speaking which is primarily associated with authentic, spontaneous communication. Moreover, it is oral communication with which the Georgian learners, exposed to grammar-driven teaching methods, have been having most difficulties; thus, the final choice was made to test learners' communicative proficiency through speaking, adopting an integrative rather than discrete-point testing approach in the present study.

To sum up the discussion regarding language skills, their categories as well as the proficiency levels as defined in CERF, Table 10.1 is provided below. It gives a description and a visual representation of existing language skills, their division into receptive and productive categories, and the six potential proficiency levels attainable. What is not represented in this table is underlying language knowledge/ competence, which belongs to the more static and discrete domain of the language faculty. In the present study, learners' theoretical knowledge and/or their linguistic competence is taken as having been manifested through language skills and the proficiency levels are assigned according to the language competence demonstrated through actual speaking production, referred to in this study as communicative proficiency (for more discussion on the linguistic terminology used, see Section 10.2.1).

Table 10.2: Language skills, theri categories and proficiency levels (CERF)

	Categories of language skills			Proficiencty Levels					
				Basic		Independent		Proficient	
				A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Language skills	Receptive	Listening							
		Reading							
	Productive	Speaking	Spoken production						
			Spoken interaction						
		Writing							

As already mentioned above (Section 10.2.3), for the present study, the assessment scheme proposed in CEFR for qualitative aspects of spoken language use has been adopted for the assessment of Georgian learners' communicative proficiency in English (see Appendix 10.1). This assessment scheme is aimed at checking all the components of Communicative Competence – discourse competence is looked at through coherence/cohesion; strategic competence through fluency; socio-cultural competence through interaction; and linguistic competence will be tested through accuracy and grammatical and lexical range components offered in the assessment scheme. The only change made to the original CEFR assessment tool was adding the pronunciation component, which is not among the original CEFR spoken language descriptors. The decision was motivated by the fact that, in some cases, especially with speakers whose language is phonologically completely different from the target foreign language they are learning, pronunciation might be a cause of communication breakdown. For this reason, assessing Georgian learners' pronunciation as part of their overall communicative proficiency in English was believed to be relevant.

It is also important to note that in CEFR, in the language skills assessment grid presented in Table 10.2 above, the speaking skill is further subdivided into spoken production and spoken interaction. To better capture both types of oral communication as proposed in CEFR and thus to make the assessment process more comprehensive, two forms of speech collection supplementing one another were administered during the data collection process in the present study: picture description and role play tasks. Whereas through the picture descriptions learners' narrative speech was generated, the role play task stimulated learner interaction, providing data about their sociolinguistic and strategic competences in the English language.

To generate free narrative speech, a picture was provided for description. Generally, the speech elicited though visual aids cannot be

considered to be totally "spontaneous", since it is "induced by some "visual stimulus" (Trofimova, 2009:114); however, this type of semi-free generated speech is believed to be advantageous to the present analysis. Whereas in the speech produced as a result of open-ended questions respondents can avoid using constructions and language that are difficult and demanding, in the picture description task a certain framework is provided within which participants have to perform. According to Yorkston and Beukelman (1980), there is also more "predictability" in this model with regard to what language speakers are likely to produce (cited in Trofimova, 2009:114). For the present study, this method of data collection is useful as it makes data comparison easier across various speakers: a certain vocabulary as well as grammatical range is expected to be produced by the speakers during the task performed.

When I conducted the interviews for the task, I presented the learners with a randomly selected magazine picture; it was selected on the basis of the assumption that its topic would be interesting to the learners and that they would be comfortable when describing it – a family of four, consisting of parents and two young children, on the beach with an interesting scenery and summer activities visible in the background. As it was September and pupils had just arrived back from their holidays, the topic was relevant and learners were expected to have much to say. Figure 10.1 provides the picture that was used in the study.

Figure 10.1: The picture used for speech data collection

The second task was role play. My reasons for selecting this task were that as communicative competence in a language includes an ability of social interaction, it was considered necessary to check this aspect of language competence in the form of a role play (Tavakoli et al., 2011). Even though role play can be somewhat artificial in some cases (McBride & Schostak, 2004:2), it can nevertheless reveal the communicative skills on the speakers' part. In the present study, students were asked to act out a conversation between two strangers in a train compartment on their way home from the holidays. They were told that in about three or four minutes, the train would stop and they would have to take their leave by saying goodbye. Even though the students were free to choose the conversation subject, a certain framework was naturally generated by the cues that were included in the task requirements given to the learners. Figure 10.2 presents the role play task given to the study participants.

Imagine you are two strangers traveling on a train, coming back from the summer holidays. You start a conversation. Ask any questions you want. At some point the train stops and you say good-bye to each other.

Figure 10.2: Role Play task assigned to the participants in the study[2]

Both picture description and role play tasks were suitable for learners whose level of language proficiency was expected to range from A1 to B1, as it allowed the production of both basic and more complex language (For a description of this range, see Table 10.5 below; for the speech samples for various proficiency levels, see Appendix 10.5).

[2] The task was created by myself; the image inserted was retrieved from the Internet: http://www. clker.com/clipart-2312.html (accessed August 2011).

10.2.4 Data collection procedure

Out of 693 learners who completed the questionnaires, the spoken performance of 321 participants were recorded; from these, 65 were selected for their communi-cative proficiency assessment purposes. The selection was made on the basis of and determined by, firstly, the representative nature of the speech samples – one group of learners from each school type was selected to assess learners' communicative proficiency. As a result, as different school types are not evenly populated in Georgia (see Chapter 7, footnote 3), the learner distribution according the various school types turned out to be somewhat unequal (see Table 10.1 below). Other
criteria for the selection of the data to be analysed included the quality of the recordings, as well as the amount of material feasible to be analysed withing this study.

For every speaker about six minutes of spoken performance was recorded: about three minutes of picture description (monologues, with minimal involvement of the interviewer), and about three minutes of role play, which took the form of pair work.

The speaking sessions were held during school hours: special arrangements were made with the school administrations and the teachers to allow pairs of pupils to leave the class for about ten minutes during the lessons. The participants were asked to speak continuously about the picture without interruptions; however, in cases when participants were unable to produce any speech, extra questions were asked to help them generate ideas.

Some speech samples illustrative of learners' oral proficiency are provided in Appendix 10.5. As for the audio recordings of the learners' speech, in order not to violate the confidentiality guarantee provided to the school administrations as well as to the head teachers of the classes approached (see Section 10.2.2), the recordings have not been published together with this dissertation; however, they are available from the researcher upon request.

10.2.5 Data analysis

Data processing and speech assessment procedure

The recorded speech data were eventually assessed by four raters: myself, two Georgian and one English native speaker, in the age range of 30-55, all with a foreign language teaching experience ranging between 10-14 years.

All four raters had experience with using CEFR assessment tools for oral proficiency assessment purposes; even so, a preparatory session with each of them was held where the assessment procedure and the CEFR descriptors were discussed and pre-designed evaluation forms were provided (see Appendix 10.2). Seven distinct aspects of learners' proficiency were assessed,

and on this basis, their overall communicative proficiency was also estimated:[3] (1) Accuracy, (2) Grammatical Range, (3) Lexical Range, (4) Fluency, (5) Coherence/Cohesion, (6) Pronunciation, (7) Interaction, and (8) Overall communicative proficiency.

The assessments were made on a rating scale ranging from 0 to 6, corresponding to the CEFR spoken language proficiency global descriptors: 0=A0: Almost no competence; 1=A1: Limited competence; 2=A2: Basic competence; 3=B1: Sufficient competence; 4=B2: Good competence; 5=C1: Very good competence; 6=C2: Perfect competence. All the data obtained from the assessments were coded and entered into SPSS 20.0 for statistical analysis.

Inter-rater reliability

An inter-rater reliability was tested. A Cohen's Kappa coefficient is usually calculated for inter-rater reliability testing; however, according to Landis and Koch (1977:159), "*kappa* is mostly suggested in case the dependent variables are of a categorical nature"; if the data bears a continuous (interval or ratio) character, "the agreement and parallelism" can be determined through the use of an intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) with the help of an analysis-of-variance (Haley & Osberg, 1989:970). The ICC range is from 0.0 to 1.0. The ICC two-way mixed model analysis applied to the present evaluation data revealed a high reliability coefficient: α =.980, which means that there was minimal inter-rater variability observed with regard to the assessment scores. Next, the averages of the assessment scores provided by the four raters were calculated and all the subsequent tests were applied to these dependent variables.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis

The next step that was taken to analyze the data was to carry out descriptive and inferential statistics tests: in order to describe the population participating in the study, frequency and percentage calculations were conducted on the independent variables (see Section 10.2.1); mean and standard deviation tests were applied to the dependent variables, i.e. learners' average proficiency scores (see Table 10.4). To check whether there was a correlation among learners' performance scores in various language aspects – that is, to find out whether learners who score highly in one spoken language aspect tend to score highly in the other aspects as well – a Pearson's Correlation test was applied (see Appendix 10.4).

[3] In the original CEFR document, Grammatical and Lexical Range is combined under the same the Range category; however, in accordance with the purpose of the present study, further refinement of the category was believed to be useful.

To check the analysis outcomes across two independent variables (e.g. 'school type', 'exposure to extracurricular language learning') several statistical tests were applied: a Cross-Tabulation analysis was undertaken to check learners' overall language proficiency level distribution across various school types (see Table 10.6) as well as the relationship between the 'school type' and 'exposure to extracurricular language learning' (see Table 10. 7). The effects of the independent variables were checked through ANOVA (see Appendix 10.3). Post-hoc analysis tests, with the Bonferonni normalization option, were applied in SPSS to detect where exactly the between-group differences lay. A significance level of .05 was set for all inferential statistics tests.

When comparing and cross-referencing the results of the four studies presented in this dissertation across different school types (see Figure 10.6), no statistical analysis was applied since these dependent variables were generated in non-comparable ways and derived from different study populations; the data were only juxtaposed to reveal the general tendencies. For more information regarding the data analysis approach adopted in this study, see Section 7. 2.5.

10.3 STUDY RESULTS

In this section, the results of the analysis conducted with regard to learners' communicative proficiency will be presented and the research questions 1 and 2 will be answered (Section 10.3.1). As a way of drawing together the main findings of all four studies presented in this dissertation and analysing the effect of the main independent factor – 'school type' – on the overall analysis results, the cross study comparison was conducted (see Section 10.3.2)

10.3.1 The results of learners' communicative proficiency analysis

Research question 1: *How communicatively proficient are the learners of English at secondary schools in Tbilisi?*

Before analyzing learners' communicative proficiency levels, I attempted to find out what the set end-of-year language proficiency levels were for various schools approached for the present study.

Language policy in Georgia provides only a recommendation with regard to what the language proficiency level at the end of each school grade should be; teachers do not have to follow the government-proposed school grade– proficiency level correspondence scheme (see Figure 6.2), but are free to select their own language teaching material from among the government-approved coursebooks (for more information about government approved books, see Section 5.4.2), determining the existing foreign language proficiency level of a group of learners they are teaching at their own discretion. Table 10.3 provides the information regarding which coursebooks were used as teaching material in each class observed and what the coursebook's complexity level was (see Table 9.5).

Table 10.3: Coursebooks used in the lessons observed, at private as well as public schools, in Tbilisi

School type	School name	Coursebook Name	Level[4]
Public Central	School 51	*Success A1+*	A2
	School 53	*Success A1+*	A2
	Experimental School 1	*English World 5*	B1
	Gymnasium 1	*Friends 3*	A2
Public Peripheral	School 147	*Bukia 2000 Plus*	B1
	School 122	*Lazer*	B1
	School 102	*Top Score 4*	B1
	School 133	*English World 5*	B1
Pivate Central	British-Georgian Academy	*Total English*	B2
	European School	*Gateway*	B2
Private Peripheral	XXI Century	*Lazer*	B1
	Albioni	*Challenges*	B1

The information presented above provides an insight into what the expected proficiency levels were for the groups observed at twelve schools in Tbilisi, which will be a useful reference point with which the obtained communicative performance outcomes can be compared.

Learners' overall communicative proficiency was assessed according to the CEFR descriptors of the seven aspects of spoken language use (for more details, see Appendix 10.1 and Section 10.2.3 above). More detailed illustration of how the learners' overall spoken performance was evaluated is presented in this section below, as well as in Appendix 10.5. Descriptive statistics tests were applied to the dependent variables, i.e. the average proficiency scores of all learners from all school types, the outcomes of which are reported in Table 10.4.

[4] The levels are estimated according to CEFR criteria.

Table 10.4: Learners' communicative proficiency assessment scores across various spoken language aspects[5]

Qualitative aspects of spoken Language	Min.	Max.	Mean[6]	SD
Fluency	.25	3.25	1.54	.771
Coherence and Cohesion	.25	3.00	1.46	.744
Interaction	.25	3.00	1.63	.723
Pronunciation	.25	4.0	1.75	.766
Accuracy	.50	3.25	1.47	.720
Grammatical range	.25	3.50	1.47	.765
Lexical range	.25	3.75	1.70	.796
Overall	.25	3.25	1.63	.807

Whereas no significant mean score variability is observed across the language aspects, with a spread of 1.46–1.75, and an overall score of 1.63 (CEFR level A1), there is a large intra-group variability revealed across the learners' language proficiency scores, the minimum being .25 (CEFR level A0) and the maximum 3.75 (CEFR level B2). This means that there were cases of dramatically different levels of communicative proficiency among the seventh-/eighth-grade language learners studied. To check whether these differences were defined by the different types of language instruction to which learners were exposed in school (as a result of classroom observations, described in Chapter 9, it was detected that at private schools language teaching bore a significantly more communicative character than at public schools; see Table 9.1), further exploration was undertaken, which is described below in this section under Research Question 2.

To explore whether there were certain aspects of communicative proficiency that some learners were consistently better at than others and whether they could be categorized as belonging to either more linguistic-competence-oriented (e.g. lexis, grammar, accuracy) or more communicative-competence-oriented (e.g. interaction, fluency, coherence/cohesion) groups, an inter-item correlation analysis was conducted. Learners' performance scores in various language aspects were checked through a Pearson's Correlation test, the results of which showed a strong relationship coefficient: *r* ranging from 897 to 953, *p.*=.000

[5] Fluency, Coherence and Cohesion, and Interation are the three language-related aspects closely related to the communicative value of a language, whereas Pronunciation, Accuracy, and Grammatical and Lexical Range represent more linguistic knowledge-related language areas.

[6] Mean scores are presented on an assessment scale of 0 – 6, with the numbers corresponding to CERF Proficiency levels (see Section 10.2.5).

across all components of the assessment scheme (for more details of the correlation analysis, see Appendix 10.4). This result is consistent with the assumption made above in this section regarding the homogeneity of language learners' performance outcomes across various language aspects presented in Table 10.4 and confirms that the constituent components of learners' oral proficiency are indeed interrelated: the higher a learner scores in one aspect of language competence, the greater the chances that his/her competence in other language aspects will also be higher. In lines with the above finding, Savignon argues that "all the components [of Communicative Competence] are related, and they cannot be developed, or be measured, in isolation" (Savignon, 2002:8). This assumption also speaks in favor of the assessment scheme adopted in this study – all its constituent aspects represent one whole construct which comprehensively measures learners' overall communicative proficiency.

To further look at the learners' overall communicative proficiency scores and to determine how many instances of each language proficiency level were detected among the participants, the number of students with each proficiency level was counted. The results are presented in Table 10.5.

Table 10.5: Descriptive statistics of the learners' overall communicative proficiency

Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percentage
A0	4	6.0
A1	26	41.0
A2	22	33.0
B1	12	18.5
B2	1	1.5
Total	65	100

The results reported above again show that the highest number of seventh/eighth-grade learners of English at the participating secondary schools in Tbilisi are at language proficiency level A1, the second largest group of learners at A2, while the B1 level is observed in only about half as many cases. A0 and B2 can be seen as marginal cases of language proficiency in this set.

As the findings presented in Tables 10.4 and 10.5 reveal, the overall level of language proficiency (1.63/A1) proves to be at least one step behind the level recommended in the national language policy document , which is set at A2/B1 for these grades (see Table 6.1). Comparison of the data presented in Tables 10.3 (coursebooks and their proficiency levels employed in language classes in Georgia) and 10.4 (learners' actual proficiency levels) also reveals that the English language proficiency level of students at secondary schools was lower than what is assumed by the textbooks used as teaching material in the lessons (for language proficiency level distribution across the four school types, see Table 10.6 below).

To compare the present results with regard to learners' communicative proficiency level in Tbilisi with the results achieved by learners at the National Exams in foreign languages, English in this case, relevant data were obtained from the National Assessment and Exam Center of Georgia (NAEC), and these are presented in Figure 10.3 below:

Georgian learners' performance in English at National Exams in Tbilisi		Frequency distribution of learners' scores
Number of participants	10.158	
Mean score (on a scale of 1–100/ CEF: B1)	44.62	
Percentage of the participants who passed	81.89%	
Percentage of the participants who failed	18.11%	

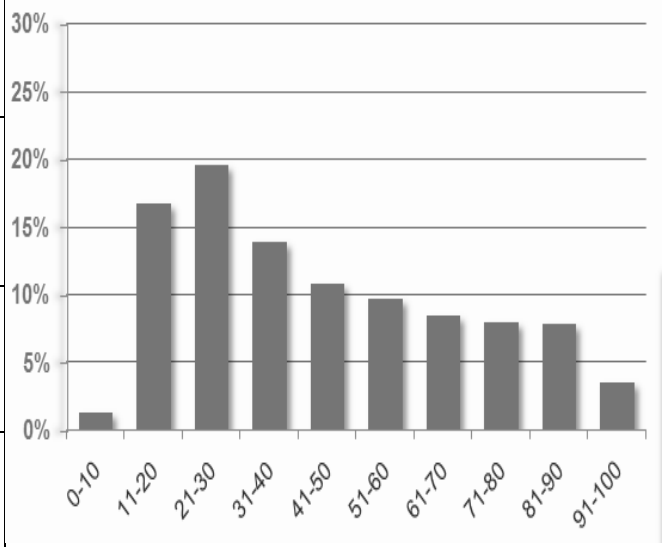

Figure 10.3: Learners' proficiency results in English at the National Exam in Georgia[7]

The scores in the figure are presented on a 0–100 point scale, and the complexity level of the test employed for the assessment purposes was B1. This means that the mean score of 44 points equals CEFR A1/A2 proficiency levels. It is also important to note that, as presented in the figure, the highest number of students scored between 11–20 and 21–30 points on their tests (A1). However, there were also instances of very high scores – 3% scored in the range of 91–100 (B1/B2 level). The variability observed is indicative of the fact that there are significant differences among learners' language abilities detected at the National Exams in languages in Georgia, which is in line with the results of the study presented in this chapter (see Table 10.5). Regrettably,

[7] Retrieved from http://www.naec.ge (accessed December 2013).

no information was available at the NAEC regarding which schools the highest and lowest scoring learners belonged to. If we interpret the data presented in Figure 10.3 in the light of the findings obtained in the present study, it can be assumed that most of the highest scoring learners might be coming from private schools, whereas the lowest scoring pupils come from public ones. It is also noteworthy that at the National Exams, only reading and writing skills have been tested so far, and only recently was it announced that the listening skills component would also be incorporated in the testing system in the nearest future; as for speaking, it remains a component largely absent from the assessment format employed at school as well as University level in Georgia.[8]

It is also interesting to compare the language proficiency results obtained by the students at the National Entrance Exams in 2013 with those from the 1990s, which are reported in the study by Tkemaladze et al. (2001:138-139). It should be noted that the two tests are quite similar – they both test only reading and writing skills and both are of approximately B1 complexity level.[9] The average score achieved by the students at the 1990 language exam in English is 33 points on a 50-point language test (above average), which is about the same achievement indicator than the one detected in the 2013 National Exam (compare with the data in Figure 10.3 above).

To provide more insight into the learners' speech assessed in the present study, the speech samples for each proficiency level were written out and illustrated in Appendix 10.5. The transcripts attached reveal considerable differences in the foreign-language communicative proficiency of students of approximately the same age: differences in speech styles, accents, speech rates, and range of grammar and vocabulary used to perform the task in question. Also, some of the learners managed to deploy communication strategies such as rephrasing and circumlo-cution, whereas others demonstrated a total lack of such skills. The personal traits of the speaker also played a role: some were shier and more difficult to involve in speaking; others were more open and willing to speak out and demonstrate their language abilities. These discrete factors are also believed to have affected the participants' performance to a certain degree.

To better show how the learners' oral performance was rated, some illustrative examples of the criteria applied to each proficiency level will be discussed in this paragraph (further details regarding the assessment criteria employed in this study can be found in the CEFR document presented in Appendix 10.1; more extensive monologue as well as dialogue samples for

[8] Retrieved from www.naec.ge/erovnuli-erovnuli-gamocdebi/ertiani-erovnuli-gamocde-bisiakhleebi/3196-informacia-uckhouri-enis-mosmenis-davalebis-shesakheb.html?lang=k a-GE (accessed October 2013).

[9] The sample tests used in the 1990s at the National University Entrance Exams in English can be found in Tkemaladze et al. (2001:131-137).

each proficiency level, as well as the clarification of the symbols used in the transcripts, can be found in Appendix 10.5).

Level A0 was assigned to those speakers who were unable to comprehend any instructions addressed to them in English, and whose performance resulted in a communication breakdown at the very initial stage of communication. See a part of the speech sample below[10]:

Task 1: Picture description

Interviewer: What can you see in the picture?
Learner Family…as…uh….dad…uh…as children…… mum is… "*shvilebi rogor aris inglisurad?* – [how is 'children' in English?]*"* (prompt), yes, children… (communication breakdown).
Interviewer: What do you see in the background?
Learner: Mmm…(prompt) – mountain…beautiful…yes…(communication breakdown).

Learners grouped under the A1 language proficiency level were the ones whose communicative abilities were very limited. They demonstrated a very basic repertoire of grammatical as well as lexical range, much hesitation and incoherent speech, and poor pronunciation, which made the speech incomprehensible at times. There was much recourse to the Georgian language for the purpose of asking clarifications. See an extract from the speech sample below:

Learner: Uh, these people are…uh…uh…on holiday…they are on seaside…uh…uh……weather is sunny……uh……(communication breakdown)
Interviewer: What can you say about the family?
Learner: Uh…This is father, mother, daughter and son… I think that this boy can't swim, so he has got this…uh…… (communication breakdown).
Interviewer: What about the nature?
Learner: Nature?...uh...uh……uh…...here are some hotels, I think…uh… this is castle, maybe…uh……some mountains there……(communication breakdown).

The learners grouped under the A2 proficiency level were those who managed to demonstrate certain communicative abilities – to get the message across through simple, short, often inaccurate but, in most of the cases, comprehensible sentences; These learners were also able to reformulate some of their utterances to better convey the meaning, to ask for support and help while speaking, as well as self-correct in an attempt to fix certain inaccuaracies. An extract from the speech sample is presented below.

[10] For the clarification of the symbols used in the speech samples presented below, see footnotes 2, 3, 4 in Appendix 10.5.

Learner: Here is a little family: there are mother, father, sister and brother. They're in beach, they have fun day, I think. There are some guys in the…uh…I forgot it…in beautiful *boat*/bouθ/. Here are some beautiful houses, and here are *some – many* people, I can say; and they are swimming in water, playing in water, it's…and… uh…then…uh…they…are doing…..doing some things…uh…we do this…uh… with the ground of beach; and they have fun here, I can say...

Learners assigned proficiency level B1 demonstrated an ability to use a reasonable range of lexical as well as grammatical units, making their speech noticeably richer and coherent. There were certain hesitations, circumlocutions as well as inaccuracies present in their spoken performance; however, this, in a majority of cases, did not result in communication breakdown or incomprehensible speech. They demonstrated the ability to maintain the communication and to keep the conversation going by asking questions as well as initiating new topics for discussion. There was no need for the interviewer to prompt or stimulate the speech. An extract from the speech sample follows below.

Learner*:* This family went to Greece....in...island. It's summer, it's already August, and they're having fun, and there's the whole family: mother, father and children; *their- they're* uh…they are having much fun, they are on a beach and one hour ago they came here. There is also pool and they will like it, but their mother and
father told them that sea is better for them, like for everyone, but it's not available to swim too far, because there are sharks...

Only one learner from the entire population studied demonstrated B2 level language proficiency. This learner demonstrated a good level of fluency as well as quite a wide range of language structure knowledge, making their speaking more fluent and varied. Certrain inaccuracies observed in the speech were, in most cases, self-corrected and did not cause any comprehension difficulties. The learner also demonstrated a good level of strategic competence in communication and the ability to initiate the discourse as well as take turns during communication. An illustrative sample is presented below.

Learner: So, I can see a happy family in this picture. There are two children, *a man and a…a husband and a* wife; their marriage is very happy, the children are very happy too. The boy is wearing green sunglasses, and *there is – and around* the boy there is something like the sun, *which helps him not to – which helps him to* swim in the sea. In the background, I can definitely say that there is a mountain…*there is not much…the sky is not really* cloudy and I can see people playing volleyball and…and they are trying to ride the boat in the sea, I think...

The learners' speech analyzed in this study is also illustrative of the typical language mistakes that Georgian speakers make as a result of first-language (L1) interference while speaking English, such as the omission and misuse of articles (e.g. 'they are on sea side'/'I visit a parks, museums'), the avoidance of inversion in questions (e.g. 'what you see?'), direct transfer of Georgian grammatical structures and lexical units into English ('Italia'/'Romi'), and mispronouncing English sounds non-existent in Georgian, and which tend to be problematic for Georgian speakers while speaking in English –/ð/, /θ/, /v/, /w/, /æ/ (e.g., 'I think'–/ai **s**ink/; 'This is...'–/**z**is iz/; 'Where do you live'–/**v**er du yu: liv/; 'I was..'–/ai **v**oz/; 'dad'–/ded/. Deeper linguistic analysis, which would involve further exploration of this type of material, goes beyond the limits of the present study, however, and should be the subject of further investigation

To provide more insight into the learners' speech assessed in the present study, the speech samples for each proficiency level were written out and illustrated in Appendix 10.5. The transcripts attached reveal considerable differences in the foreign-language communicative proficiency of students of approximately the same age.

Research question 2: *To what extent is learners' communicative proficiency in English affected by factors such as 'school type', 'length of language teaching in school', and 'exposure to language teaching outside school'?*

There are many external factors that might affect the language proficiency level of learners of English – and of foreign languages in general – at secondary schools in Tbilisi. In order to determine what factors, other than the teaching methodology and actual teaching practice the learners are exposed to in school might influence their achievement or failure in foreign language learning, all important independent factors were thoroughly explored. The investigation started by ascertaining how the situation with regard to learners' communicative proficiency varied across different school types. As a result of ANOVA, it was revealed that the effect size of 'school type' was significant [$F(3, 61)=24.8$, $p.=.000$] further post-hoc analysis showed that learners at Private Central schools consistently scored significantly higher than their public school counterparts in all seven aspects of Communicative proficiency ($p.=.000$). As for the assessment outcomes of learners from Private Peripheral schools, their achievement level was significantly higher ($p.=.000$) than that of learners' from Public schools in all but three aspects: Grammatical Range, Pronunciation and Interaction, and significantly lower ($p.=.015$; $p.=.024$; $p.=.028$ respectively) than the performance results of their Private Central school peers. For more details of the analysis, see Appendix 10.3. The results of the analysis run on the composite scores of learners' communicative proficiency testing across four school types are reported in Figure 10.4.

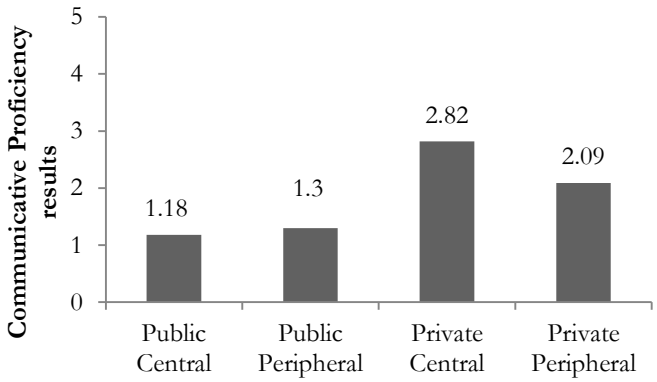

Figure 10.4: Learners' communicative proficiency distribution across four school types

The effect of the 'school type' turned out to be significant [F(3, 61)=24.8, *p.*=.000] – as an ANOVA and post-hoc analysis revealed the communicative proficiency levels at Private Central schools are significantly higher than those at all other school types (Public Central – *p.*=.000; Public Peripheral – *p.*=.000; Private Peripheral – *p.*=.26). The difference was also significant between Private Peripheral, on the one hand, and both types of public schools, on the other (Public Central – *p.*=.000; Public Peripheral – *p.*=.003). No difference was detected in terms of learners' communi-cative proficiency levels between the two public school types.

To detect the overall language proficiency level distribution across various school types a cross tabulation was conducted. The results are presented in Table 10.6.

Table 10.6: Overall language proficiency levels across four school types

		Four school types				Total
		Public Central	Public Peripheral	Private Central	Private Peripheral	
Overall language proficiency	**A0**	3	1	0	0	4
		13.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.2%
	A1	13	9	0	0	22
		56.6%	45.0%	0.0%	0.0%	39.0 %
	A2	5	9	3	9	26
		21.7%	45.0%	27.3%	81.8%	40.15%
	B1	2	1	7	2	12
		8.7%	5.0%	63.7%	18.2%	18.5%
	B2	0	0	1	0	1
		0.0%	0.0%	9.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Total		23	20	11	11	65
		100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%

To sum up the results of the analysis of the language proficiency level distribution presented in Table 10.6, the general tendency observed is that the lowest levels belong to Public and the highest to Private school types: instances of A0 level were
detected only at public schools, while the vast majority of the highest scores, B1 and B2, were found at Private schools.

Length of English language teaching at school

To look into the question of whether length of English language teaching at school had a significant effect on learners' communicative proficiency level in English, an Independent Samples T-test was run. The results confirmed the expectation that the length of language teaching in a foreign language does have a significant effect on learners' performance in English: the group of learners who had undergone more than five years of instruction in English significantly outperformed those who had been exposed to less than five years of language teaching -$t(63)=3.79$; $p.=.000$.

Exposure to extracurricular language teaching

The figure below presents the information regarding the learners' communicative proficiency distributed across the groups with different backgrounds of extra-curricular English learning.

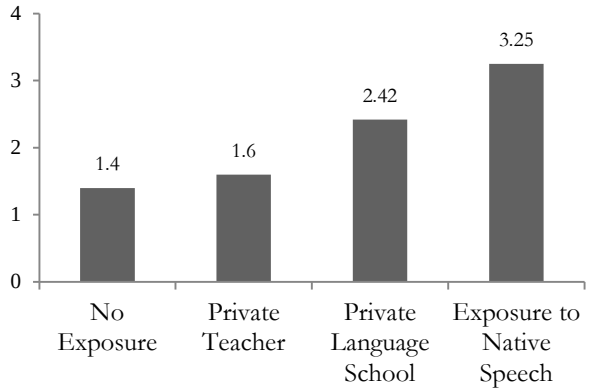

Figure 10.5: Learner communicative performance outcomes across groups with different extracurricular language learning backgrounds

According to the analysis results, more than half the participants in this study had received some form of external language instruction, private tutoring being by far the most popular form of extracurricular language instruction (see Table 10.1). In this instance, an ANOVA was applied to the data to find out how similar the performance of the groups with and without additional language instruction was. The type of extracurricular language instruction proved to have a significant effect [$F(3, 61)=8.66$, $p.=.000$]; post-hoc analysis of the data yielded interesting results: no statistically significant difference was detected between the performance of the groups studying with a private teacher and those with no exposure to English language teaching outside school ($p.=1.000$); however, the difference was statistically significant between the 'private language school' and 'no exposure' groups ($p.=.013$) as well as between the variables 'exposure to native environment/native speaker teacher' and both the 'no exposure' ($p.=.004$) and the 'private teacher' groups ($p.=.018$). The difference was not statistically significant between 'exposure to native environment/native speaker teacher' and 'private language school' learner performance (see Figure 10.5). These findings imply that private tutoring does not actually contribute to the development of learners' communicative proficiency, whereas attending a private language school seems to be a better option for improving learners' communicative skills in in English, and the

opportunities offered in the context of a native speaking envi-ronment prove to be the best way of making learners communicatively proficient.

I next decided to check whether there was a relationship between the variables 'school type' and the type of 'exposure to language teaching outside school', or to put it more specifically, whether the Private Central school pupils were the ones who had most exposure to a native speaking environment and/or to private language school instruction. These findings were expected to provide some perspective regarding whether the better communicative performance on the learners' part observed at private schools was due directly to the greater degree of communicative teaching observed at their schools (see Figure 9.1), or whether other external factors also played a role. A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to find out what the learner exposure to outside school language teaching was at the various school types. The results are provided in the table below.

Table 10.7: Exposure to extracurricular language teaching at various school types

School Type	No Exposure	Private Teacher	Private Language School	Native Speaking Environment	Total
Public Central	7	15	1	0	23
Public Peripheral	10	10	0	0	20
Private Central	2	2	5	2	11
Private Peripheral	6	5	0	0	11
Total	25	32	6	2	65

The analysis revealed that the majority (seven out of eleven) of the Private Central school learners had studied at a private language school or had been exposed to a native speaking environment or been taught by a native-speaker teacher, whereas there was only one case of private language school instruction and no cases of exposure to native speech detected among students of other school types. Analysing the effect of sex of learners' on the study results yielded no significant differenesand no further exploration was undertaken in this direction.

10.3.2 The comparison of the main results of the four studies across different school types

As the present study is the last of the studies presented in this dissertation, it was deemed useful to conclude this chapter by drawing together all the main results of the four studies. The findings are compared across the background of the main independent variable, 'school type', and the results are reported in Figure 10.6 below.

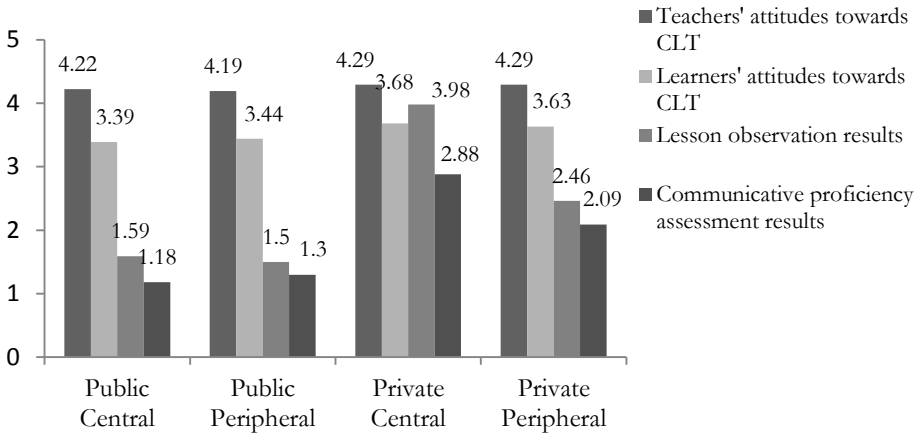

Figure 10.6: Comparison of teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT, observation and communicative proficiency assessment results

The results of the comparative analysis reveal that there is relatively little variation between teachers' and learners' attitudes, as well as between the lesson observation and communicative proficiency assessment outcomes across different school types. However, the difference between teachers' and learners' attitude results on the one hand and the observation as well as proficiency assessment results on the other are notable at all schools except for the Private Central ones (the situation at Private Central schools deviates from the pattern observed at all the other school types: the teachers' attitudes towards CLT are the highest, followed by the learners' positive attitudes and then by the visibly lower observation outcomes, which tend to be a bit higher than the communicative proficiency level of language learners revealed at secondary schools in Tbilisi. The tendencies identified for the four studies are almost identical for both types of public schools and similar to private peripheral school results. At Private Central schools, however, the variability among the results obtained for the four studies is less visible than at any other school types, the gap being somewhat considerable between teachers' attitudes and learners' final proficiency outcomes. Thus, as a result of the multiple comparisons, it can be concluded that it is at Private Central schools that whatever is theoretized (attitudes and conceptions) and practised (classroom teaching) is best reflected at the practical level (learners' communicative proficiency).

10.4 CONCLUSIONS

The present study has sought to explore the English language learners' communicative proficiency level at secondary schools in Tbilisi, as a way of measuring the success and practical impact of the language policy officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education of Georgia. The effects of certain independent factors on the level of teh learners' communicative proficiency have also been explored. The answers to the research questions formulated at the beginning of the chapter will be addressed below.

1. The level of communicative proficiency of the learners of English

The assessment by four raters show that the average communicative proficiency of seventh- and eighth-grade learners of English at secondary schools in Tbilisi is much lower (A1=1.63) than the government-recommended language proficiency level, as well as the level assumed by the coursebooks (A2/B1 in the majority of cases) employed as teaching material by language teachers of these grades (see Tables 10.3 and 10.4). Such a mismatch is larger at public than at private schools.

However, it should also be borne in mind that in the present study the learners' communicative proficiency was tested through a productive skill, namely speaking, and as has already been mentioned above (see Section 10.2.3) generally, producing language, in written and especially in spoken form, tends to be more difficult to master than mere comprehension of the language, through reading or listening, is (Saville-Troike, 2006:137). Furthermore, scholars strictly distinguish between linguistic knowledge, on the one hand, and an actual ability to use that knowledge for communicative purposes, on the other (for more discussion, see Section 10.1). Thus, as a result of the present study, I cannot claim that the overall proficiency level of the learners would be the same as revealed in the present study if it was their linguistic knowledge that was checked, or if their competence was tested through another skill. Such multi-directional investigation would exceed the scope of the present exploration (for more discussion of the assessment choices made in the present study, see Section 10.2.3).

2. The effects of 'school type' and other learner-related characteristics on their communicative proficiency

Investigation into the effects of independent factors on learners' communicative proficiency revealed significant differences across different teaching/learning contexts, as well as between groups of learners of varying characteristics.

School type

The level of language learners' communicative proficiency proved to be significantly higher at private than at public schools (see Figure 10.4): Georgian language learners at private schools scored consistently higher across all communicative proficiency areas than their public school peers (see also Appendix 10.3).

The comparison of Study 1 to 4 showed that teachers' as well as learners' attitudes towards CLT are almost identical across all school types. However, the differences are considerable with regard to teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT on the one hand and the communicative character of the actual teaching practice as well as the learners' final language proficiency results on the other across the vaious schools. The comparison showed that at a pratical level (the actual classroom practice and the learners' oral performance) the situation is much better at Private, in particular Private Central schools, than at both types of Public schools (see Figure 10.6).

To what extent learners' better performance can be attributed to the teaching methods employed at Private schools is something that still has to be considered. Hence, more learner-related factors were explored in this study, the results of which are summed up in the next section.

Length of language teaching

The length of language teaching received by an individual student proved to have a positive impact on learners' communicative proficiency – learners with over five or more years of language teaching performing significantly better than the group with under five years of language instruction. This finding might be informative for language policy makers in the debate around the optimum grade at which to commence foreign language teaching at secondary schools in Georgia, and which might prove to be supportive of the change recently introduced whereby foreign language instruction now starts from the first grade at Georgian schools (for more information about the language policy changes in Georgia, see Section 5.4). However, despite the positive effect of a greater length of language teaching, there are research findings available which indicate that the quality of teaching, the appropriateness of the methodology applied as well as the adaptation of teaching techniques to the age groups in question, proves to be equally if not more important than simply the length of language teaching (Turtel, 2005).

Exposure to extracurricular language teaching

Noteworthy results were obtained with regard to the effect of extracurricular language instruction on learners' communicative proficiency: only the exposure to a native speaking environment and language teaching at private language centers proved to have a significant effect on learners' improved

communicative proficiency in English, whereas language teaching received through a private teacher had no significant effect. These findings are indicative of the fact that, despite being the most widely-operated form of extracurricular supplementary language instruction (see Table 10.1) in Tbilisi, the language teaching offered by private tutors does not per se lead to improved communicative proficiency. Factors such as what kind of a private tutor a learner has – experienced/inexperienced; native/non-native, as well as the amount of teaching one gets – must be playing an important role in this regard (see Figure 10.5).

As for exposure to private language school instruction as well as to the language of native speakers, these factors proved to offer much better opportunities for communicative proficiency improvement to language learners. Unlike private tutors, private schools, in the context of increasing competition in the private sector for language teaching in Tbilisi, are seeking to brand themselves as institutions providing language learners with practical language skills and communication abilities through modern and innovative teaching methods, which, as the present study confirms, proves to have some validity. As to the effect of exposure to a native-speaking environment, it goes without saying that this is the best method for improving communication skills, a widely-acknowledged fact which has been reinforced once again in this study.

In the present study, it was also revealed that it is predominantly Private Central school pupils who tend to receive language teaching through a language center and/or from a native speaker, with the vast majority of public school pupils either receiving no extra instruction or attending lessons offered by a private tutor, which in Georgia might be a much more affordable and more available option than studying at a private language school or finding a way to have a systematic contact with a native speaker (see Section 10.3: *Exposure to extracurricular language teaching*). This observation, to some extent, serves to support the argument that the social background of learners attending private schools permits them to receive better-quality, more communication-oriented language instruction both at their schools (see Table 9.9) and beyond resulting in significantly higher communicative profi-ciency than their public school peers, who are largely deprived of such oppor-tunities.

The discussion of the effects of the sociolinguistic factors can be further expanded by viewing the situation in the light of Bernstein's (1971) theory of language codes. According to Bernstein (1971), coming from a higher social class is already a factor which has a positive impact on learners' better communicative skills, overall. More specifically, according to Bernstein (1971:135-36), there is a strong correlation between social class and the use of either "restricted" or "elaborate code" of speech, the lower class representatives tending to be using more of a restricted speech patterns, whereas the middle and higher classes, being "geographically, socially and culturally [more] mobile", practised more elaborate speaking codes (cited in Spring, 2002:2). Bernstein's

theory might provide some explanation as to why the private school learners, who tend to represent the middle to high social class in Georgia, considerably out-perform public school learners, who are likely to have a socially less priviledged background. Thus, the private school learners, expected to be using a more elaborate code of speech in their everyday lives, might be transferring the same code while speaking in a foreign language, whereas the public school pupils might be sticking to the restricted speech pattern typical of the native speech of many of them.

To conclude the present chapter, it can be said, that in Georgia, as in many other countries (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008:221), even after years of being exposed to foreign language instruction at school, students do not achieve an adequate level of proficiency, especially when it comes to the ability to practically applywhat has been learned in theory. Comments such as "I know all the grammar rules, but I cannot speak" are commonplace, as is the phenomenon of seeing language learners who, while they manage to pass their written examinations at the high proficiency level with grade A, are not able to string a spoken sentence together. As already disussed in Section 5.3, the priority in Georgia today in the field of language teaching has shifted from providing theoretical knowledge of language rules towards developing more practical, communicative abilities in language learners. This is believed to be a precondition of success in providing Georgian citizens with better perspectives and wider possibilities for their future careers. Hence, it is important to consider what it takes to put language teaching at the service of achieving these global aims. Adopting a method which in theory is claimed to be targeting the right goals is not sufficient, such as the mere official adoption of CLT in the case of Georgia. Also, as the results of the present study illustrate (see Section 10.3, RQ2), when it comes to aiming at improving learners' communicative competence, alongside the teaching quality, quite a few other factors have to be taken into account too. Like any other teaching method, CLT as well is likely to be more suitable to certain groups of learners than to others. Consequently, considering certain affective social factors and making context-specific adjustments are always highly desirable rather than opting for the wholesale, unquestioned adoption of a method created in a distinct cultural and social environment.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSIONS

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Four years after the introduction of the first communicative curriculum for foreign languages, in 2001, a Georgian research team (Tkemaladze et al., 2001), supported by the British Council in Georgia and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, conducted an investigation of the English language teaching and learning situation in Georgia. Recommendations were provided with regard to what needed to be changed or what innovations should be introduced in the ELT field in Georgia. This group of researchers advised making English the first foreign language at schools, taught to every school child from as early an age as possible (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:114). They also suggested introducing better-quality coursebooks (which were all British-published at the schools approached in this study), conducting much-needed language teacher training and compiling teacher training standards (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:113-114). Most of these recommenda- tions have, since 2001, been followed at the governmental level in Georgia (see Section 4.4), particularly since the second wave of more ambitious reforms started in the field of foreign language teaching in 2009.

In this light, it was interesting to analyze what effects have the changes made since 1997 in foreign language teaching field, and more specifically in English Language Teaching, had on the situation at secondary schools in Georgia. It was particularly interesting to investigate whether a visible change at the language policy level in favor of the communicative teaching/learning of foreign languages, first introduced in Georgia in 1997 and later revised in 2009, is duly reflected in teachers' classroom practice as well as learners' communicative proficiency in English at secondary schools in Tbilisi. So, the most important components involved in the successful implementation of a teaching method have been dealt with (see Figure 1.1). I first looked at teachers' awareness of the curriculum for foreign languages in place in Georgia[1], as well as their understanding of the language teaching methodology presented in the policy document. Teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the officially endorsed methodology were as well and classsroom observations were also undertaken in order to see how the official methodology recommendations, together with English language teachers' and learners' theoretical perceptions, are reflected in actual English language lessons. Finally, the communicative proficiency of Georgian learners in English was

[1] The National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (for more information see Chapter 6).

assessed, which provided information regarding the extent to which efforts of the Government undertaken thus far and the current situation in the ELT field in Georgia are reflected in learners' communicative abilities in English.

Chapter overview

Section 11.2 of this chapter provides an executive summary, conclusions and discussion of the outcomes across all four studies undertaken as part of the present research. Section 11.3 looks into the challenges highlighted by the teachers themselves, as well as those observed in the lessons, and provides recommendations with regard to how to overcome these so that the current language policy and language teaching practice in Georgia is more conducive to higher communicative proficiency outcomes on the learners' part than was observed in the pesent study. In Section 11.4, the major strengths and limitations of the conducted research are discussed, while Section 11.5 provides suggestions for further research. The final section, 11.6, presents concluding remarks.

11.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this section, I will deal with the issues that emerged from the different studies I conducted and that were the focus of Chapters 7 to 10. I will summarize these studies by describing their main findings.

STUDY 1: Teachers' perceptions and acceptance of Communicative Language Teaching in Tbilisi.

Teachers' awareness of **(RQ1)** *and compliance with* **(RQ2)** *the existing language curriculum:*

The interviews, which I conducted in the framework of my study with teachers at secondary schools in Tbilisi, revealed that the vast majority of language teachers in Georgia have a very vague awareness of the details of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (see Table 7.4). A similary low extent of compliance with the language curriculum recommendations was detected on the part of the participating teachers (see Table 7.7), which, to some extent, explains why the overwhelming majority of them regard their coursebooks as the main guideline that they follow in their teaching.

The lack of external evaluations (from governmental or non-governmental bodies) associated with the process of language teaching/learning at secondary schools in Tbilisi might be one of the explanations why teachers do not feel accountable for or experience any need to follow the official language teaching recommendations. All mid-term and end-of-year language testing is compiled and/or selected by the teachers themselves, and they take the decisions on the whats and hows of testing on their own. Consequently,

language tests tend to be adapted to the material covered and the type of activities conducted by the teacher during the course. The above reasons, combined with the scant effort observed on the part of policy makers and school administrations in Georgia to raise language teachers' awareness of and compliance with the official foreign language teaching requirements might explain why Georgian secondary-school language teachers tend to have little knowledge of, and in the vast majority of cases do not follow the official language teaching recommendations.

The above findings are also indicative of the fact that no unified and consolidated approach to language teaching and testing is to be expected across different secondary schools in Georgia, the situations and the academic choices tending to be determined according to the judgment and decisions of local school administrators and individual teachers.

The level of language teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of Communicative Language Teaching **(RQ3)**

In order to answer the third research question of Study 1 (Chapter 7), first a literature review was conducted on Communicative Language Teaching in general (see Chapter 3). The core underlying principles and concepts of the method were identified, which served as a point of reference in the process of establishing Georgian language teachers' knowledge of CLT theory.

The interviews conducted with language teachers in Tbilisi illustrate that there seems to be an overall lack of proper understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT. This type of problem is typically present in cases where there is a lack of "academic formation" in the area of language teaching methodology (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004:252-253) and is explained by the incidental, inconsistent character of teacher education and training offered to secondary school teachers both at pre-service and in-service levels (Henard, 2010:43). It is essential that ordinary practitioners of language teaching possess a clear understanding of the central ideas of the methodology they are using in order to achieve their teaching goals (Swarbrick, 1994:1), the lack of such awareness is likely – as is also proved in practice at secondary schools in Tbilisi (see Table 9.6) – to lead to teaching practice and results lacking in coherence, consistency and communicative nature (see Study 3 below).

It is generally true that ambiguity about an innovation to be implemented creates higher risks of failure (Janssen et al., 2013:19). CLT is considered by many as an approach replete with ambiguity, giving more space for interpretation and flexiblity than any other language teaching methods formerly favored in Georgia (and elsewhere), such as the Grammar-Translation or the Audio-Lingual Method did. Pointing out the eclectic nature of Communicative Language Teaching, Swarbrick (1994:10) also admits the challenge of providing practicing teachers with the clear understanding of what

CLT really implies/entails. Hiep (2000) reinforces Swarbrick's conclusions by stating that CLT does indeed allow for many different understandings, descriptions and uses of itself (2000:193). However, despite the generalistic guidelines that CLT offers, there still are cerain clear features and aims that characterize this method, which allows teachers to act freely yet rationnally within a clear methodological framework. Thus, it is important that the teachers understand the main underpinnings of CLT, so that they are able to base their teaching on the main principles of this method and at the same time feel free and capable of adapting their practices according to the practicalities of classroom instruction.

Language teachers' acceptance of Communicative Language Teaching **(RQ4)**

As argued by Webster et al. (2012), "for successful implementation of language innovation, the users (teachers and learners) must view the proposed change favorably. Unless and until attitudes change favorably towards the proposed language, users will continue to reject the intended language innovation" (2012:37). It was for this reason that the exploration of teachers', as well as learners', attitudes towards CLT was undertaken, in the Study 2 (see below).

The investigation into Georgian language teachers' attitudes towards and acceptance of CLT was conducted by interviewing teachers as well as having them complete opinion and attitude survey questionnaires. As a result, it was revealed that, in theory, the teachers strongly approve of Communicative Language Teaching, seeing it as an efficient tool of language instruction (see Table 7.11). In actual practice, however, as will be shown below, in most of the cases, their teaching does not bear the same kind of communicative character as their theoretical perceptions do.

Teachers' evaluation of CLT-related challenges **(RQ5)**

Despite the positive attitude towards and support of the adoption of CLT observed on the part of language teachers, most of the issues associated with CLT implementation in non-English contexts discussed in the literature (see Section 3.10) were also broadly acknowledged as problematic by the Georgian teachers (Table 7.10). In the interviews, teachers seemed more reserved about admitting those challenges that involved issues of their own standing, and instead mainly brought up more learner-related and administration-related issues, such as the difficulty of involving all learners in communicative activities, a lack of infrastructure and teaching/learning resources, large class sizes and CLT implementation-related classroom management problems (see Table 7.10). However, in the questionnaires, when teachers were asked about the same challenges in more general terms (see Appendix 7.3b, items 47- 61), they were more critical in evaluating the degree of challenge the lack of certain

teacher-related competencies might be conducive to: a lack of communicative proficiency in English, a need for a more profound theoretical knowledge and understanding on teachers' part, as well as the necessity of more professional development training for the teachers (see Table 7.12).

It is interesting to note that the country's language testing and assessment system, which seems to have remained largely language-form-oriented, focusing on writing and reading skills only (for comparison, see the English language test of the 1990s [Tkemaladze et al., 2001:131-137] and the test administered in 2013 at the National University Entrance Exams in English in Georgia[2]), was rated as the least problematic aspect both in interviews and in questionnaires by the language teachers. However, it is obvious that such a form of language assessment is incompatible with the principles of CLT, and consequently does not help contribute to the transformation of form-focused language teaching into a more communicative mode of language instruction (for more discussion on the observed challenges and language assessment-related issues in language classes in Tbilisi, see Section 11.3 below).

Effects of 'school type', 'teacher age' and 'teaching experience' on teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards CLT **(RQ6)**

No significant overall differences were found between the groups of teachers from the various school types with respect to policy document awareness and compliance with its recommendations (see Tables 7.4 and 7.7). As for their understanding of CLT theory, I found that the teachers at private, centrally-located schools were significantly more aware of the theory underlying CLT than the ones representing other school types (see Section 7.3.1).

Here, it is interesting to note, that even though it was revealed that teachers at public schools in Georgia have a longer average length of language teaching experience and tend to be older than private school teachers (see Section 7.2.2), neither of these factors has an effect upon their level of awareness of and compliance with the current language policy or of knowledge/understanding of the theory of CLT. Being older and having more experience does not make teachers either more appreciative of more communicative way of teaching or less daunted when confronted with CLT-associated challenges in their classroom practice.

To sum up, teachers at secondary schools in Georgia, both public and private ones, demonstrate a favorable attitude towards and an acceptance of Communicative Language Teaching in theory. However, the findings of Study 1 indicate the urgency of raising awareness both of the officially recommended language teaching methodology and of the language standards, as well as the

[2] Information retrieved from http://www.naec.ge/images/doc/EXAMS/ english _v3 2013. pdf (accessed October 2013).

need to provide language teachers with a solid understanding of the theories underlying Communicative Language Teaching. Only when the theoretical basis of novel teaching modes and the patterns that the language instructors are encouraged to adopt are well internalized and understood will official policy recommendations lead to more profound changes in the field concerned. By this means alone can the transformation be achieved of turning today's teachers into more communicative language practitioners whose efforts are more conducive to improving language learners' communicative competence at secondary schools in Georgia.

STUDY 2: Learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching in Tbilisi

Secondary school language learners' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching **(RQ1)**

The study of learners' attitudes towards CLT revealed that, overall, Georgian learners demonstrate acceptance of Communicative Language Teaching, of most of its principles as well as practices (Table 8.3).However, there were certain non-CLT learning experiences towards which learners showed their preference over more CLT-compatible practices (see Appendix 8.2). For instance, the majority of learners expressed a preference for focusing on language accuracy rather than fluency, as well as preferring exam preparation in lessons rather than real-life communication. For most students who are concerned with passing their final exams and obtaining good grades, it is vital that they feel a sense of security during the study process, to know that whatever they do in the lesson will help them perform better during the final examinations. This might be expected to be a more immediate and relevant study goal for a thirteen- or fourteen-year old learner than thinking in a longer-term perspective about their lifelong objectives or aiming at acquiring the skills that will equip them with the competence to function efficiently in some as-yet abstract situations in the future. This gives grounds for characterizing Georgian learners' attitudes towards language learning as 'instrumental' (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), namely, aimed at fulfilling the immediate goals of their language learning (more discussion on 'integrative' versus 'instrumental' attitudes is offered in Section 8.1).

Here, again, the vital importance of bringing the advocated teaching method in line with an assessment system is revealed: unless the forms of assessment applied in Georgia bear a more communicative skills orientation, and for as long as they continue to maintain their largely form-focused, non-communicative character, it will be very hard to ensure that the teaching methodology applied in the study process in Georgia bears truly communicative character.

Secondary school learners' evaluations of CLT-related challenges **(RQ2**)

Learners evaluated the application of CLT in language classes in Georgia as bearing a moderate challenge, the biggest issue reported on their part being the large group sizes at public schools in Tbilisi (see Table 8.6). The learners' evaluation of the degree of CLT-related challenges is lower than that attached to the process by the teachers (for more discussion on similarities and differences between Georgian teachers' and learners' perceptions of CLT, see RQ4 below).

The effect of 'school type' and 'sex' on learners' attitudes towards CLT **(RQ3)**

The study revealed that, overall, private school learners tend to be significantly more appreciative of CLT than their public school peers (see Figure 8.1). Private school pupils also tend to attribute significantly less challenge to the implementation of CLT than do their public school counterparts; to be more specific, school learners at Private Central schools were found to be the most welcoming of CLT of any school type participating in the present study, significantly outranking public school pupils as well as private peripherally-located school pupils on this measure (see Figure 8.3).

As for the effect of sex on the results, it was detected that there are certain aspects of CLT towards which female learners are significantly more positively disposed than male learners are. Above all, it was the communicative activities that appealed to the girls more than to the boys: activities such as presentations, discussions and debates were significantly more appreciated by female than male participants in the study (see Figure 8.2). This finding indicated that certain CLT activities might be catering to girls' preferences more than to boys. No other major differences were observed between the sexes in other respects.

Similarities and differences between language learners' and teachers' attitudes towards CLT **(RQ4**)

Analysing the differences between teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CLT showed that teachers hold significantly more positive attitudes towards CLT in certain teaching areas (see Figure 8.4). In an attempt to explain this, it can be argued that with regard to teachers, being as they are adult informants of the study process, the phenomenon known as the 'social desirability bias' (see also Section 7.2.3) might be playing a role; there are some researchers who argue that participants might be expected to act in a way that they consciously know will portray them in a more positive light (Kaminska & Foulsham, 2013:3). This scenario is more likely to take place in the case of teachers than

learners, who are more likely to respond to the statements of the questionnaire presented more frankly and intuitively.

To conclude, in response to Kavanagh (2012), who claims that "no teaching approach will be valid unless the teachers who use it and the students who are receptors of it accept it" (2012:736), we can say that, in this regard, no significant constraints that would impede the officially recommended teaching method been detected – positive attitudes were identified towards CLT on the teachers' as well as the learners' part in Tbilisi.

STUDY 3: English language lesson observations at secondary schools in Tbilisi

The communicative character of the classroom setting **(RQ1)**

Class observations revealed that English teaching at secondary schools in Tbilisi is characterized by a low degree of communicative character (see Tables 9.6 and 9.9). However, the results of the present study, conducted in 2011, are somewhat better than those reported by Tkemaladze et al. in 2001, when out of 148 classes observed, not a single communicative activity was observed to be practised in language lessons in Georgia (Tkemaladze et al, 2001:112).

CLT implementation-related challenges observed in language classrooms **(RQ2)**

Through actual lesson observations, the overall level of challenge associated with the implementation of CLT at secondary schools in Tbilisi was found to be of an above average degree of difficulty (see Table 9.8). That estimate is in-between the level of CLT-related difficulty revealed on the teachers' (Table 7.12) and learners' part (Table 8.6) in Study 1 and Study 2 respectively.

The observations also revealed that language learners tend to be the least problematic agents in the study process. No particular problems regarding their involvement in the lessons, speaking in English or reacting to English speech were detected. The biggest issue related to their cause is the widely varying levels of language proficiency hin a class. Teachers, on the other hand, were identified as the biggest source of challenge in the study process: their lack of proficiency in English, insufficient awareness of and understanding of the CLT principles, practical language teaching skills, as well as the observed influence of previously used form-focused language teaching methods, have been found to be quite pronounced. Other CLT-related challenges – large group size, CLT-related classroom manage-ment problems, classroom layouts that are impracticable for CLT implementation, a lack of teaching resources and technical facilities, an assessment system incompatible with CLT – were found in degree of severity to lie in between the learner-related and teacher-related difficulties. This pattern of distribution of the

sources of challenge is in line with how teachers evaluated CLT-related challenges in the questionnaires (see Table 7.12), but differs from teachers' evaluations reported in this regard in their interviews (see Table 7.10). In the latter case, it was problems associated with school administration and a non-CLT-compatible environment that were mentioned most frequently.

The effect of 'school type' and certain teacher characteristics on the communicative character of language teaching **(RQ3**)

Whereas the situation in terms of the communicative nature of language teaching can be characterized as rather poor at both types of public schools investigated, language practice at private schools can be described as significantly more communicative in nature. A further significant difference was observed between the communicative quality of language teaching at Private Central and Private Peripheral schools, the former bearing significantly more communicative characteristics than the latter (see Table 9.9).

As far as the impact of age is concerned, it was revealed that younger teachers tend to employ more communicative types of teaching and experience significantly fewer challenges in the process of instruction than their older colleagues (see Table 9.9). As for the teaching experience effect, it was detected that teachers having less experience demonstrate a more communicative type of instruction than their more experienced counterparts (see Table 9.9). Explanations for this finding can be identified in the literature dealing with the issue of teacher age and adoption of innovations. Generally, the young are more willing to take risks and to experiment than older people are (Hasluck, 2011:1-2). Also, it might be that, as Bradley and Devadason (2010:119) claim, young teachers are more optimistic and more capable of and adaptive to change. In an attempt to explain the teaching experience-related finding, it can also be speculated that teachers less burdened by an extensive previous teaching background are less under the influence of form-focused, 'fixed' ways of teaching, thus finding it easier to readapt to new modes of instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:252). This assumption is further reinforced by the claims made by Richards and Rodgers:

> Greater experience does not lead to greater adaptability in our beliefs, and thereby, the abandonment of strongly held pedagogic principles. Quite the contrary, in fact, the more experience we have, the more reliant on our "core" principles we have become and the less conscious we are of doing so (2001:252).

Tevzadze (2001:36) refers to the long experience of Georgian teachers of English participating in her study conducted in Georgia as being a negative factor. According to Tevzadze, generally, "this [long teaching experience] could be considered to be a positive feature, but it is, in fact, worrying in Georgia's

case". The reason for their pessimism is that these language teachers belong to the generation of teachers with a Soviet language education background, which was permeated with pedagogic principles and aims incompatible with Communicative Language Teaching standards and with present-day students' communicative needs (Tevzadze, 2001:36).

Discrepancies between teachers' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching and their actual teaching practice **(RQ4)**

The gap between how teachers feel about CLT in theory and what they actually manage to implement in practice proved to be significant at public, but not at private schools. Public school teachers stated that they were supportive and receptive of CLT; however, in actual classroom settings, their teaching reflects very few signs of CLT. In contrast, at private schools, teachers' attitudes towards CLT and what they actually are able to implement in their language classes are not notably different (see Figure 9.2). These results indicate that the strong acceptance and approval of a suggested teaching method is not always in and of itself a sufficient precondition for its successful application in the classroom. Other teacher-related as well as practical factors also play a significant role in this respect.

Some academics blame the situation on the failure on the teachers' part to properly interpret the proposed recommendations and to grasp their practical implications (Ansarey, 2012:64), which was the case detected with respect to Georgian teachers of English at most of the secondary schools explored in this study.

Furthermore, the influence of traditional ways of teaching might be at work. In the present study, the majority of teachers were in the age range of 35-65. This means that all of them will have received their language education, and pre-service training, if any, on the basis of the Grammar-translation tradition, which dominated Soviet language education at that time. Some argue that the cause is simply human nature, which is prone to stick to tried and trusted practices; these seem to exert "a magical hold on us" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001:557).

Fear of losing face might be another factor that puts older established teachers off teaching a language communicatively, being an approach that they feel less capable in, compared with teaching grammar and language form. Teachers – even those with years of experience – when in new roles often perceive themselves as novices in the context of innovation, which considerably affects their self-esteem and may lead to resistance and non-compliance on their part towards the new paradigms of instruction (Janssen et al., 2013:14). Possible evidence that this factor is also at work with respect to the Georgian teachers is the observation made in this study regarding some of the participating teachers' comments uttered before the observations started, particularly by teachers whose lessons suffered the most from the non-CLT

approach to teaching. This category of teachers was prone to warn me and the other observer that the lesson that was about to start was not a typical one, and that it was only a revision lesson (even though the school year had just started). Some of them also complained about not being able to conduct 'proper' lessons with that particular group claiming that the learners were extremely 'weak' and had been taught by another teacher the previous year. These comments, to some extent, reveal 'face-saving' elements on some of the Georgian teachers' part at public schools in Tbilisi, namely in the case of (some of) those who were inefficient in their teaching and who seemed to be subconsciously aware of the fact.

There is also an argument that starting the introduction of educational reforms from above is not always the best thing to do, and that in most cases, "a bottom-up approach" seems to be more effective (Kavanagh, 2012:736; Kara-khanyan, 2011:21). In Georgia's case, the innovation was introduced at the policy level and only later was it attempted to somehow contribute to the whole process of transforming language teaching into a communicative framework (see Section 5.4).

The English lesson observations in Tbilisi have also reinforced the prior assumption that what is theorized at the policy as well as at language teachers' conceptual level is not always widely substantiated in practice. Although the language curriculum in Georgia is now based on the premises of CLT, and even though the attitudes and conceptions of those responsible for delivering this new style of teaching are positive, the majority of teachers at public schools in Georgia are unable to take up CLT and instead carry on with traditional language form-oriented instruction. Fortunately, the situation in the private sector, especially at Private Central schools, is considerably better and can be evaluated as satisfactory (see Figure 9.2). This means that as long as certain components necessary for the efficient implementation of CLT are in place, this method can be successful in Georgia, leading to the increased communicative proficiency of the language learners.

STUDY 4: Learners' communicative proficiency in English at secondary schools in Tbilisi

Communicative proficiency level of learners of English (**RQ1**)

Theoretically speaking, there is nothing wrong with being at any proficiency level in a foreign language at any age; what matters is how large the gap between teaching/learning goals and outcomes is, and whether the length of language instruction received is adequate to learners' current language abilities.

Study 4, reported on in Chapter 10, estimated seventh-/eighth-grade Georgian language learners' overall level proficiency in English at approximately A1 to A2 CERF level (see Tables 10.4 and 10.5). This attested proficiency is one to two levels lower than what has been promulgated as the

appropriate target proficiency level in foreign languages for this age group in the National Curriculum, as well as by the coursebooks which were employed as teaching material in the classrooms observed in the study (see Table 10.3).

The same average proficiency level (A1/A2) was detected on the part of the sixteen/seventeen-year-old learners at the National University Entrance Exams in English in 2013 as was revealed in Study 4 among twelve-/thirteen-year-old participants (compare Table 10.5 and Figure 10.3). However, the fact that learners' language proficiency in the National Entrance Exams was checked through reading and writing skills only, and not through speaking, as in the case of Study 4, makes it difficult to form accurate assumptions as to what the results would be if learners' communicative abilities were tested through speaking at the National Exams. As already mentioned (Section 10.2.3), since active language production requires higher language competence than its mere comprehension, it is generally believed that learners' proficiency level demonstrated through productive skills, and particularly speaking, tends to be lower than that revealed through receptive skills (Saville-Troike, 2006:137). Based on this judgment, we could expect even lower proficiency results at the National Exams if applicants' language abilities had been checked through speaking instead. One of the explanations for this, then, could be that students who took part in the National Entrance Exams came not only from Tbilisi, where the most efforts have been made to transform the language education, but also from all the regions of the country, where learners' proficiency level in English might be expected to be lower (because of the much poorer resources and reform outreach) than that of learners living in the capital. Thus, exploration of the situation in Georgia's non-central regions was beyond the scope of the present dissertation and could be an area to be profitably further explored in future research.

Further comparison of the results of the most recent National Entrance Exam in English in 2013 (Figure 10.3) with the results of a similar exam from the late 1990s (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:138-139), which was of the same level of complexity (B1) and which used a similar format of testing (reading and writing exercises only), revealed roughly the same results (see Section 10.3). This finding is indicative of the fact that considerable efforts made on the Georgian government's part since the 1990s to transform the language education system into a more communicative one have not made any viable difference: these efforts have not been reflected in Georgian learners' actual language proficiency to any measurable degree thus far.

Effect of school type and exposure to extracurricular language learning on secondary school learners' communicative proficiency in English **(RQ2**)

School Type

The results of Study 4, in which I investigated the learners' communicative proficiency at secondary schools in Tbilisi, are in line with the results revealed by Study 3, English lesson observations, in that they both reveal better teachers' as well as learners' performance at Private, and in particular Private Central, than at Public schools. This means that the quality of teaching offered at various schools in Tbilisi, together with other factors, might have its considerable bearing on the final results obtained – learners' communicative proficiency in English (see Figure 10.4). Whereas the proficiency level of most of the private school pupils is in the range of A2-B2, which satisfies the achievement level requirements proposed in the policy document for the age group under investigation, the vast majority of public school participants were in the A0–A2 proficiency level range (Table 10.6), which is not satisfactory according to the official language standards of Georgia.

The reasons why the nature of language teaching as well as learners' communicative proficiency achievement levels are better in the private than the public sector might include certain other factors than the better quality of language instruction offered at these schools. As far as language teachers are concerned, at private schools, higher teacher salaries, better working conditions, smaller class sizes, and in most cases, a better teaching and learning resources, together with teaching environment and school infrastructure are likely to be playing a crucial role in their better performance and their closer compliance with the language teaching methodology requirements (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008:18).

As for the learners, here the factor of their social background has to be considered. The fact that most of the private school students belong to the more priviledged social class, who are more likely to see the possibility of their travelling, studying or working abroad as more realistic than their public school peers, might make them more motivated to learn foreign languages and more appreciative of the practical skills-oriented teaching. Generally, increased motivation and perception of the immediate practical need of a learning experience, on its part, is conducive to learners' enhanced learning capabilities. The private school learners are also the ones who are more likely to have had more extensive extracurricular language learning opportunities – they are the ones who are more likely to have already traveled, studied or lived abroad than their public school counterparts. Consequently, Private school learners' better performance should be attributed not only to more communicative teaching practice employed at school, but also to other positive factors involved in their case.

To sum up the analysis of the results of all four studies presented in this dissertation across the different school types, it can be claimed that whereas the situation with regard to CLT is more or less the same at all schools at a theoretical level, there are significant differences across the various school types as far as the practical aspect of things is concerned – language teaching practice as well as learners' actual communicative proficiency. The situation is better at Private Central schools, followed by the Private Peripheral type; at the two types of public schools, the situation with respect to Communicative Language Teaching practice and learners' communicative proficiency results are almost identical, falling behind the results obtained at either category of private schools significantly (see Figure 10.5).

Effect of extracurricular language learning

Only certain types of extracurricular language learning opportunities were detected to have a positive effect on learners' communicative proficiency outcomes. It turns out that language education received through a private tutor is not very useful for improving learners' communicative proficiency in English in Georgia, whereas private language schools and exposure to native speech were confirmed to be means conducive to the acquisition of better communicative skills by learners (see Figure 10.5).

The reason for the above findings might be that, when taking lessons with a private tutor, learners find themselves face-to-face with the tutor only, and typically activities in the lesson do not tend to be focused on real communication but on an exchange of lesson-oriented sentences between the pupil and the teacher. At language schools, on the other hand, learners – who form groups consisting of up to 12 students – have more opportunities for engaging in natural conversation in the target foreign language; and there, teachers have more opportunities for conducting more skills-oriented activities through more communicative teaching patterns – using both group and pair work. Moreover, private schools try to brand themselves as practicing 'modern and communicative' methods of language teaching, methods which are believed to be largely unavailable at public schools in Georgia. 'Communicative' and 'interactive' are some of the widely used buzzwords employed for promoting private language school services in Georgia.

Exposure to a native-speaking environment or language instruction provided by a native speaker teacher was found to be the best supplement to the language education provided at secondary schools in Tbilisi. When a student is exposed to native speech, his or her communication in the target foreign language becomes purposeful, which can be regarded as a positive factor for developing learners' communicative proficiency.

Study 4 also revealed that it is private school learners who tend to be exposed to the types of extracurricular language learning that have been proven

to be significantly more efficient than others at improving their communicative proficiency in English (see Figure 10.7). This finding, to some extent, serves to support the argument that the social background of learners attending private schools permits them to receive better-quality, more communication-oriented language instruction both at their schools (see Figure 9.1) and outside (see Table 10.7), resulting in the end-product of a significantly higher communicative proficiency than their public school peers can achieve, who seem to be deprived of such opportunities.

11.3 CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So far I have summarized the findings of the studies looking into the current situation in Georgia with regard to Communicative Language Teaching. The question now is what efforts need to be made so that better communicative proficiency is achieved in language, and more specifically English, teaching in Georgia. Thus, in what follows, I will provide recommendations for each of the challenge identified during the investigations.

Challenge #1: Lack of understanding of the general principles and recommendations of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages of Georgia

The issue of Georgian language teachers' low awareness of the existence and contents of the document which forms the policy they should be implementing and, most importantly, the understanding of the main principles the official curriculum offers has been an important one since the post-Soviet years and is still evident today (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:38). Even though it is assuredly not the sole reason for the deficiencies observed today in CLT at secondary schools in Tbilisi, this low awareness of and lack of accountability in complying with the official foreign language teaching recommendations, as revealed on the teachers' part in the present research, definitely takes its toll on the overall situation in the ELT field in Georgia.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that more efforts be directed towards better explaining the need of complying with and higher awareness on the teachers' part of the general contents and recommendations of the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages. Unless more action is taken in this regard, little account will be taken of the language policy recommendations – new teaching goals it sets, learning stadards it defines and teaching approaches it proposes. This will prevent the new policies from informing the actual teaching practice.

Challenge # 2: Lack of knowledge and understanding of the didactic principles of Communicative Language Teaching

It is not uncommon for language teachers to be unaware of the didactic principles and theoretical base of the language teaching method they are supposed to employ. Consequently, they hold such misconceptions as that the only thing that efficient teaching takes is some experience and the short-term initial supervision of an experienced teacher.

A similar situation as described in the preceding paragraph was observed with regard to Georgian teachers of English in Tbilisi. Study 1 (Chapter 7) of the present dissertation revealed that there is a palpable lack of understanding of the didactic principles of CLT, as well as of general language teaching and learning theory, among the Georgian teachers of English interviewed (see Tables 7.8 and 7.9).

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the prevalent myth that certain people are just "born" good teachers is dispelled (Uhlenbeck, 2002:243), and concrete efforts must be made in order to help teachers acquire a more profound understanding of the theory of teaching. More attention should be given to both disciplinary and pedagogic content knowledge[3] provision to prospective teachers at university level (Richards, 2011:6) in Georgia. This will prevent teachers from having considerable gaps in their understanding of the main principles upon which they should be basing their practices. Before such a change at university level can yield results, which is a longer-term prospect, it is recommended that a theoretical component be added to the teacher training courses currently offered in Georgia. It is believed that teachers with solid knowledge of the underlying didactic principles and pedagogic value of a method "make better and more appropriate decisions about teaching and learning and arrive at more appropriate solutions to problems than a teacher without such knowledge" (Richards, 2011:22). Richards (2011) further argues that a well-prepared teacher, with a solid background in both disciplinary as well as pedagogic content knowledge, manifests the abilities to cater to the communicative needs of the learner, to set the right goals, adapt the teaching material, as well as to choose

[3] "Disciplinary knowledge", according to Richards, includes language and learning theory, the history of language teaching methods, theories of second-language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics, whereas "pedagogical content knowledge" concentrates on more practical knowledge, drawn from the study of language teaching. and learning, such as curriculum planning, assessment, reflective teaching, classroom management, and skills teaching (Richards, 2011: 6).

the right practice and evaluation tasks (Richard, 2011:6). This makes a substantial difference to the quality of language teaching (Richards, 2011:7).

Furthermore, in the present generation of teachers, the acquisition of "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge" – an ability to understand in which ways it is most beneficial to integrate technology into teaching, what traditional means it should replace and which it should not replace – has also become essential for language teachers (Richards, 2011:7). According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), this could involve being able to use a certain technology, to create materials and activities using technology as well as being able to teach through technology (cited in Richards, 2011:8). Thus, it is recommended that proper account be taken of the importance of providing teachers with Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) and the skills for its application. The integration of technology into teaching, in general, and in particular in language teaching, has become a necessary component of the professional competence of the present-day language teachers, who need to keep pace with present-day learners' communicative needs (Richards, 2011:7).

In Georgia, information technology has just started entering the field of education and is still largely underused. This is mainly due to the small scale of technology-infused teaching/learning opportunities provided at educational institutions, as well as to a lack on the part of education providers of the skills necessary for technology-integrated teaching (Edisherashvili & Smakman, 2013:80). Hence, providing teachers in Georgia with assistance and guidance in this direction is of the utmost importance.

Challenge # 3: Lack of relevant CLT skills

Having a profound theoretical understanding, even though a prerequisite, does not often on its own lead to efficiency in actual teaching practice, and "training in the techniques and procedures of a specific method is essential" (Richards & Rogers, 2001:250). According to Richards (2011), "the teacher has to have a repertoire of techniques and routines at her fingertips" to make the lessons consistent, structured and targeted. Each language teaching method requires a different set of skills and techniques in the teaching process, and so CLT is no exception. It is generally accepted that CLT skills are much more demanding than those needed for a more conventional type of teaching, such as the Grammar-Translation Method.

Efficient CLT skills were largely conspicuous by their absence in most of the English lessons observed at secondary schools in Tbilisi. Even if, according to Tkemaladze et al. (2001:112), the explanation offered in 2001 for the above circumstances was to attribute the failings to an "almost total absence of teacher training for teachers", surely this argument no longer holds validity. All the teachers approached within Study 1 reported having had some kind of training course, most of them even claiming to have had a "number of them" (see Section 7.2.2). There is also evidence that the Georgian government has

been making efforts in this direction by building a special Teacher Training House for this purpose in 2011, which is proclaimed to be delivering teacher training on a regular basis (see Section 5.4).

However, the results of Study 3, English Language Lesson Observations (see Table 9.8), as well as the challenges reported by the teachers in relation to their teaching skills (see Table 7.10), confirm that that there is a need for teachers to have training to help them acquire the necessary CLT skills. This finding makes our questioning of the quality and relevance of the teacher training courses currently available in Georgia legitimate. Hence, in the light of the present research findings, a list of recommendations is presented below with regard to what elements teacher training courses delivered in Georgia must comprise in order to meet the needs of secondary school language teachers.

Recommendations:

Teacher training should include a practical component

Teacher training courses in Georgia should not only aim at providing theoretical knowledge or help teachers practice their skills in a simulated context, but should also include an actual teaching practice component. Currently, teacher training courses involve no on-the-job training component, and for this reason, the sessions bear a rather general character, overlooking the practicalities of specific teaching environments.

Also, it should be mentioned that the need for more intensive training to equip teachers with the proper teaching skills has become more pronounced with the introduction of CLT as a recommended language teaching method. Earlier, in teacher-dominated classrooms, where mostly whole-group activities were expected to take place, and where the teacher was the center and served as a single source of information, it was easier to manage classroom processes. In student-dominated CLT classrooms, however, the teaching/learning processes, which are more spontaneous, individualized and diverse, are much more complicated to handle (Janssen et al., 2013:18). Consequently, teachers need to be consulted and guided on these practical matters more than before.

Teacher training should focus more sharply on developing critical thinking and analytical skills in language teachers

According to Richards (2011), training programs need to be aimed at not only equipping teacher trainees with a mastery of teaching skills, but also, as he puts it, with "specialized thinking skills" (2011:22). As Richards further observes, actual teaching practice involves "engaging in sophisticated processes of observation, reflection, and assessment and making decisions about which course of action to take from a range of available alternatives" (Richards, 2011:10). Kumaravadivelu (2008) argues that teacher training courses should

not just "pass on a body of knowledge" of ELT, but should rather be "dialogically constructed by participants who think and act critically" (2008:182). If theoretical knowledge is necessary for making informed decisions with regard to classroom practice, then an ability to analyze the actual teaching processes is necessary if a teacher is to be able to "theorize from practice" (Richards, 2011:22).

It is recommended that teacher training courses in Georgia include components which will contribute to the development of critical thinking and analytical skills in teachers, a faculty which was largely absent in the teaching practice of the Georgian teachers observed both at public as well as private schools. According to Kumaravadivelu (2008), the above goal can be achieved through involving local teachers in peer observation, feedback sessions and each others' teaching practice analysis. Supervised group discussions and collaborative work where knowledge and skills will be shared are also believed to contribute to the efficiency and development of better analytical skills on the part of language teachers (Richards, 2011:25). Thus, placing more focus on developing teachers' independent critical thinking and analysis skills will help teachers derive much more benefit from the training, which will thereby have a longer-lasting and more progressive effect. The classroom, as Janssen et al. (2013:17) observe, is a "habitat" which defines possibilities and limitations for the study participants – teachers as well as learners. It is a place where a complex combination of interactions takes place – physical, emotional as well as intellectual – and being able to interpret those strands appropriately and to determine the right ways to react in a given context is an important competence that an efficient language teacher has to possess.

Teacher training should take more account of the local context and teacher needs

There is evidence that in other countries undergoing similar transformations in the field of ELT to Georgia, even in cases where teachers have been sent abroad on a one-year teacher training course in an attempt to transform their teaching practice into a more communicative experience, such efforts have failed due to the barriers and constraints imposed by the practicalities of the local context (Kavanagh, 2012:734).

It is strongly recommended that teacher training courses in Georgia take more account of the Georgian teaching context. In Georgia, as Study 3 revealed, teacher-related challenges are the most dominant ones, followed by practical challenges related to the implementation of CLT itself, with learner-related challenges being minimal (see Table 9.8). Considering this information, training can be made more focused and made to deal with problems not in a general, but rather in a targeted manner, which will help make the training experience more relevant and efficient for local teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2008:172).

More systematic and longer teacher training courses

Mastery of teaching skills takes much time and supervised practice. It takes time before newly-acquired teaching skills develop into automatic routines, which once internalized eventually lead to more flexibility and "improvisational teaching" (Tsui, 2009:190; Borg, 2009:163). Thus, as Study 3 revealed, it can be argued that as long as training courses offered to teachers continue to be short-term, unsystematic or lacking in post-training supervision/observation components, they will tend to provide equally short-term and unsystematic results. Hence, it is recommended that post-training supervision be provided to teachers, in order to provide more prolonged assistance with new methods, and that supervision include post-graduation lesson observations, to evaluate teachers' acquired competence in practice, as well as post-lesson feedback, to help teachers reflect upon and analyze their own strengths and weaknesses (Uhlenbeck, 2002:243).

The effect and success of teacher training courses needs to be properly assessed

To estimate the success level of teacher training, it is also essential that its effects and outcomes be adequately measured. As remarked in the study conducted in Georgia by Tkemaladze et al. (2001), often the success of a training course is assessed in terms of its frequency and number of trainees involved, rather than by any positive effects it has on teachers' actual teaching practice (2001:115).

The above argument applies to the present-day situation in ELT in Georgia as well, and highlights the need that teacher training programs include not only teacher preparation but also evaluation of their progress, as well as the assessment of the impact of training courses on teachers' classroom practice. This will help make training sessions more targeted at teachers' actual needs and their classroom practicalities.

Challenge # 4: Lack of language proficiency on the part of the teachers

According to Richards (2011), unless the language teacher possesses at least an intermediate level of language proficiency, it will be very hard for him/her to teach a language communicatively or to meet certain requirements that a communicative language teacher needs to be capable of: to provide a good language model, maintain use of the target foreign language in class, provide accurate explanations, give correct feedback and provide language enrichment opportunities for learners (2011:3).

Lack of language proficiency might result in a number of problems in a communicative language lesson: among these are sticking to the old-fashioned, form-focused language teaching, which is less demanding in terms of communicative abilities, and/or being overly dependent on the teaching

resources used, such as textbooks and exam materials, and/or a lesser probability of teachers conducting communicative activities or encouraging "improvisational learning" (Medgyes, 2001:415). All the problems listed above, as well as deficiencies in teachers' communicative proficiency, were observed in many of the classes at secondary schools in Tbilisi, Georgia (see Table 9.8).

Recommendations:

According to Richards (2011), insufficient attention is given to the issue of language teachers' communicative proficiency in many TESOL teacher-preparation programs (2011:4). This applies no less to Georgia than to other EFL countries. Existing solutions employed to overcome the deficiencies in practicing teachers' communicative proficiency include linking the language component to the methodology component in teacher training programs (Kahmi-Stein & Brinton, 2009:91) and using lesson transcripts to help teachers develop a command of classroom language (Cullen, 2002:162). Introducing certain types of problem management in this regard might serve to lessen the problem – assigning teachers only those classes which match their language proficiency level, or encouraging them to assume such CLT-compatible teaching roles which are less-demanding in terms of their linguistic abilities. However, the issue still remains problematic, as improving one's communicative proficiency, especially at an adult age, is no mere short-term effort.

Challenge # 5: Classroom infrastructure: class size and resources

Working with large classes is a factor believed to be causing problems in the process of teaching, classroom management as well as evaluation. The arrangement of CLT activities and CLT-compatible interactions (see Sections 3.7 and 3.10.3) in larger classes tend to result in many classroom management-related difficulties.

Observations of language classes at secondary schools in Tbilisi in Study 3 revealed that the number of learners ranges from around 25 to 35 students per group at public schools, and around 12 to 20 at private schools. Even though according to international standards the above reported number of students is not considered to be too large a group (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:17), the issue of large classes surfaced in the teacher interviews, questionnaires (see Tables 7.10 and 7.12) and to a notable degree during the actual classroom teaching (Table 9.8) as one of the biggest problems for practicing teachers in Tbilisi.

Lesson observations also showed that classroom arrangement and lack of equipment and teaching resources are posing higher barriers to CLT implementation than class size does (see Table 9.8). No evidence of any technology being used in language classes was observed at any of the public

secondary schools in Tbilisi (except for one Public Central school, where the 'Future Class'[4] had recently been installed, but had not been duly exploited yet). Even CD players were scarce, let alone general access to computer and Internet resources.

Recommendations:

Keeping the class to a reasonable size is advisable where the teaching of languages, and particularly Communicative Language Teaching, is concerned. Communicative lessons result in significant levels of noise, chaos and movement, for which more space and more CLT-friendly classroom arrangement is needed as well as better classroom management skills on the teachers' part.

As far as teaching equipment and resources are concerned, it should be noted that a lack of technology makes many CLT experiences impossible, such as conducting listening or video activities; making the requisite information technology available for teaching or learning purposes is also very important in CLT lessons, as this provides a myriad of opportunities for direct access and exposure to authentic language and communication.

Hence, it is strongly recommended that the environment in language classes at secondary schools in Tbilisi become more CLT-friendly and better equipped technologically. This will facilitate CLT implementation for Georgian teachers who are already struggling with many of the practicalities of their everyday teaching (see Table 9.8).

Challenge # 6: Inadequate assessment system

An inadequate assessment system is believed to be s serious deterrent factor in the process of language teaching and learning transformation (Kavanagh, 2012:731). In Georgia, the language standards and aims on the one hand and the language assessment system, on the other do not seem to be compatible.

Even though in the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages the importance of communication skills and competences is emphasized (see Chapter 6), neither the assessment system employed at schools, nor the National University Entrance Exams is any aspect of communication covered. Reading and writing are the main areas assessed in English language examinations today,[5] the assessment of learners' communicative abilities being laregely ignored. In such circumstances, there is little likelihood that the situation with regard to CLT will change to any significant degree. This assumption can be further reinforced by the present research findings:

[4] For more information about the 'Future Class' at secondary schools in Georgia, see 5.5.1.

[5] For more information about the samples of the assessment forms used in Georgia see Chapter 10, footnote 10.

Georgian language learners prefer to focus in lessons on final test and exam materials and on skills practice rather than on developing authentic communication abilities (see Section 8.3; Appendix 8.2). This finding reveals learners' preoccupation with focusing on whatever is tested in the forthcoming tests and exams. Thus, it can be concluded that as long as language assessment maintains its largely form-oriented character, little change can be expected with regard to transforming form-focused teaching into a more communicative type; both teachers and learners in Georgia will continue to be tempted to widely ignore communicative activities and the development of real communication skills in the study process.

Also, given the absence of external evaluation, all responsibility for testing and evaluating language learners' progress, right up until the National University Entrance Exams, remains mainly in the hands of individual school teachers' and, to some extent, in school administrations' hands. Such total independence and lack of accountability makes language teachers in Tbilisi less motivated to comply with the officially recommended CLT, rendering the assessment system lacking in consistency and standardization across various school types.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a more standardized and centralized language assessment system be employed for checking learners' proficiency in foreign languages in Georgia. All assessment/testing forms employed – for ongoing, mid-term and end-of-year language proficiency assessment at schools as well as at the National University Entrance Exam in foreign languages must be harmonized with the principles of CLT. This would motivate teachers as well as learners to sharpen their focus on communicative skills and competences in their lessons, and would considerably contribute to the transformation of the grammar-oriented language teaching, so frequently observed in language classes today in Georgia, into a more communicative teaching/learning experience.

It should also be acknowledged that an assessment of communicative abilities (in particular, speaking) is a much more complicated process, requiring much better competence on the teachers' part than grammar-oriented testing systems are (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008:18). Consequently, it is recommended that, in the absence of the much-needed skills and expertise for assessing learners' communicative competence, teachers are not left to cope alone with these challenges, and that relevant support in terms of test design as well as marking criteria is provided. A more standardized, centrally-imposed assessment system is likely to reduce the inter-teacher as well as inter-school difference and to make the assessment system for languages in Georgia more reliable (Tkemaladze et al., 2001:21).

Furthermore, including an external evaluation component at least once or twice each academic year may also be expected to be beneficial, as the sense of accountability and of responsibility for meeting official policy requirements will be raised. According to Tkemaladze et al. (2001), standardization and external evaluation will give rise to a "realistic national curriculum", one in which teachers will be motivated to try to comply with the curriculum requirements as well as feeling more conscientious about the outcomes of their teaching (2001:113). External evaluation will also increase the scope for objectively evaluating how closely the language teaching and learning process at secondary schools in Tbilisi meets the existing language proficiency standards.

Learner-related challenges have not been discussed in the present section, as they were found to be causing insignificant levels of challenge in the process of English language teaching and learning. No negative attitudes towards the currently proposed language teaching method, not any kind of serious resistance to any of the CLT principles, either in theory (questionnaires; see Section 8.3) or in actual practice (observations; see Table 9.8), were detected on the learners' part. This means that learners are not problematic agents in the process of CLT implementation in Georgia.

11.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As for the limitations of the present research, the fact that only a short period of Georgia's language teaching reform could be studied in this work could be considered as a shortcoming. Even though the language curriculum was transformed from a grammar-based into a communicative one in 1997, the second, more intensive wave of language education reform commenced only in 2009. Consequently, the intervening period may have been too short to allow for fully gauging the effects of the latter reform on language teaching in Georgia.

Another limitation might be that the effects of the implementation of CLT were explored only in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, which confines the scope of generalization of the present research findings to that city only.

The fact that learners' communicative proficiency was checked through speaking only can be identified as another shortcoming of the present study. As argued earlier in this dissertation (see Table 10.2), writing is also a productive skill through which communication takes place, and one which is believed to be a less demanding form for assessing one's foreign language proficiency than the spontaneous process of speaking. Accordingly, speaking could in the present study have been supplemented with writing tasks to make the whole assessment process more comprehensive and balanced.

11.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the above-outlined limitations of the present study, and reflecting upon prospective areas of future research to be undertaken regarding CLT, the following suggestions can be provided:

- Since there are reasons to assume that the situation observed in Tbilisi in the present study with regard to CLT in Georgia, as well as with regard to learners' levels of communicative proficiency, will be different from that in the provincial regions, further research needs to be undertaken beyond the capital, in various parts of the country.

- Given the fact that English is far and away the most popular foreign language in Georgia, the teaching of which is highly prioritized and supported by employers and parents almost without exception, a rather different situation is expected with regard to the teaching/learning of other foreign languages at secondary schools in Georgia. Thus, since the present study focuses on English language teaching only, it is highly recommended that similar research be undertaken with
  regard to the other major Western foreign languages taught at secondary schools in Georgia: German, French and Spanish. This will help provide a more comprehensive overall picture of foreign language teaching, as well as opportunities to contrast and compare the teaching and learning situations across various foreign languages in Georgia.

- Since in the present study learners' communicative proficiency was checked through the speaking skill only, learners' communicative abilities should now be explored through writing as well. Such study outcomes will provide valuable information regarding whether speaking really does place a heavier burden on language learners than writing does when they are applying the acquired foreign language for communicative purposes (Saville-Troike, 2006:147). Also, as speaking is not the only aspect that CLT is concerned with, a further investigation of multi-dimensional language knowledge and ability could provide more comprehensive information about the language proficiency of Georgian learners of English.

- Since in the present study a univariate analysis approach was employed for the data interpretation purposes, a multivariate method can be applied for deeper exploration of the possible interactions between the variables included in the present study. Also, in the present study, in certain cases, the population size of some variable sub-groups was not big enough to show significant differences even though the raw data revealed considerable variations. Thus, it is recommended that the investigation is conducted with bigger population samples (in the case of the 'teacher age' and

'extracurricular language learning' factors, for instance). The present investigation will provide a good framework and basis for such further research.

11.6 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present study have a number of practical implications for policy makers as well as for teacher trainers and for practicing teachers. With this study I have tried to contribute to the pool of knowledge regarding the English language teaching and learning situation at secondary schools in the capital of Georgia. Such data are extremely important for planning further steps and making more informed and empirically-based decisions at many distinct levels of the implementation of CLT. To now, language education reform decisions in Georgia have been based upon the copying of practices from other contexts or upon making intuitive choices. This legacy of an approach to policymaking not grounded upon empirical data might well be, in concert with other factors, a significant reason why efforts to date have not been properly reflected in improvements in learners' actual communicative proficiency.

The comprehensive exploration of English language teaching and learning in Tbilisi has revealed that a wider-scale, successful integration of Communicative Language Teaching in the ELT field is feasible and realistic in the Georgian context as long as certain criteria are met, certain requirements are satisfied and certain factors are taken account of. Significantly better situation detected in this study at private schools is a proof of the above-made claim.

Fortunately, unlike in many non-Western contexts, the principles and teaching/learning paradigms that CLT offers do not come into conflict with the ingrained Georgian teaching and learning norms. Neither any kind of emotional or cultural resistance is encountered towards this method on policy makers', school administrators', teachers', or learners' part. On the contrary, in Georgia, a Western country with a Soviet legacy that it is trying to overcome, the learning of foreign languages, and in particular English, is seen as a tool to once and for all integrate into and become an inseparable part of the 'Western world'. Taking into account future aspirations and socio-political situation in the country, it can be expected that language education in Georgia will continue to progress and be further prioritized.

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APPENDICES[1]

APPENDIX 6.1: SPEAKING AND WRITING ASSESSMENT TASK AND SCHEME SAMPLES PROVIDED IN THE NCFL

Sample Task (speaking): Using the picture, make up and tell a story — what happened two hours before the picture was taken? What happened afterwards? Specify who the people in the picture are; characterize them; tell the sequence of events; talk about when and where things happened. Time limit: 2 minutes.

Table 6.1a: A sample assessment scheme for evaluation of learners' speaking skill

Assessment areas:	**Assigned point(s)**
Task achievement	
Meets the time limit	**0-1**
Meets the content requirements of the task provided	**0-1**
Communication skills	
Describes/reports the sequence of events appropriately	**0-1**
Correctly defines the time of the events	**0-1**
Language knowledge	
Uses the language forms covered in the course	**0-2**
Adequately uses the grammatical tense forms	**0-1**
Uses the vocabulary covered during the course	**0-1**
Creative language skills	
Demonstrates imaginative skills	**0-1**
Is not daunted by linguistic challenges	**0-1**
	Total score: 10

(National Curriculum for Foreign Languages, 2011: 561)

Sample task (writing): Look at the bio-data presented and write a biography of the writer. Use the following constructions: Until…, Before…, from …to, since…. Use a minimum of 100 words.

Table 6.1b: A sample assessment scheme for evaluation of learners' writing skills

Assessment areas:	**Assigned point(s)**
Task Achievement	
Meets the word limit	**0-1**
Meets the content requirements of the task provided	**0-1**
Communication Skills	
Describes/reports the sequence of events appropriately	**0-2**
Specifies the exact time of the events	**0-2**
Language Knowledge	
Uses the grammatical constructions and language forms	**0-2**
Uses the vocabulary covered in the course	**0-2**
Creative language skills	
Is not afraid to boldly use more complex language forms	**0-1**
	Total score: 10

[1] The numbering of these separate Appendices follows that of the chapters to which they relate.

APPENDIX 6.2: SAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED SYLLABUS CONTENTS FOR FUCTIONAL LANGUAGE AND LEXIS IN ENGLISH

Table 6.1: The samples of the assessment task and scheme provided in the NCFL (Levels 1 and 2/CEFR A0-A1)

Rubrics	Functional language to be covered	
1.1. Social Interactions	**Level 1**	**Level 2**
Greeting/Saying Hello	-Hello! -Hi! / Hi Nick! -Good morning / afternoon /evening!	-Morning, mum / dad! -How are you? -Fine, thanks. -I'm fine.
Saying Goodbye/Farewell	-Goodbye! -Bye-bye! -Bye!	-Good night! -See you!
Introduction/meeting	-Hello, I'm Nick. -This is / It's John.	-My name's Jane. -Do you know Kate? -Nice to meet you.
Formal/informal address	-Please… -Honey!	-Sir / Madam… -Mr. / Mrs. / Miss Thomson…
Apologizing	-Sorry! / I'm sorry! -Excuse	-Excuse me, please! -That's / It's OK
Saying Thank you	-Thanks. -Thank you.	-Thank you so much. -Thank you very much.
Congratulating	-Happy Birthday! -Happy New Year! -Merry Christmas!	-The same to you. -Have a good time.
Praising/Encouraging	-Good for you! -Oh! Yes!	- Great! - Fine!

(National Curriculum for Foreign Languages, 2011)

Table 6.2: Recommended syllabus contents for vocabulary (Levels 3 and 4/CEFR A2)

Rubrics	Lexis to be covered	
2.1. Lexis	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
Body	Forehead; cheek; chin; wrist; palm; nail; bone; thumb; neck; stomach.	Eyelid; eyebrow; blood; elbow; fist; waist; breast; hip; chest; heart; heels.
Appearance	Good-looking; pleasant-looking; round/oval face; thin fingers; thin/thick brows.	Charming; medium, cute; high forehead; attractive; pale; gracious; wrinkled.
Characteristics	Noisy; scared; brave; polite; devoted; stupid; bright; useful; worried; hard-working.	Gloomy; exciting; delighted; curious; humorous; rude; impressive.
Clothes/accessories	Blouse; slippers; night-gown; sweater; trainers; earrings; sandals; collar; brooch; sunglasses; handbag; bracelet.	Pullover; swimming-suit; waistcoat; suit; fur coat; national clothes; tie; fan; buttons; necklace.
Hygiene	Shampoo; perfume; sponge.	Gel; make-up; nail polish.

APPENDIX 7.1A: TEACHER INTERVIEW (GEORGIAN)

გასაუბრება მასწავლებელთან

პირადი ინფორმაცია

გვარი, სახელი:
ასაკი:
სქესი:
სკოლის დასახელება:
მასწავლებლის აკადემიური კვალიფიკაცია:
უცხო ენის სწავლების გამოცდილება:
გაქვთ თუ არა გავლილი მასწავლებელთა ტრეინინგი:
საკონტაქტო ინფორმაცია:

გასაუბრება

1. იცნობთ თუ არა განათლების სამინისტროს მიერ შემუშავებულ უცხოური ენების საგნობრივ პროგრამას და სტანდარტებს?
2. იცით თუ არა უცხო ენის სწავლების რა სახის მეთოდოლოგიური რეკომენდაციებიები და მიზნებია წარმოდგენილი ამ დოკუმენტში?
3. რამდენად ახერხებთ დოკუმენტში წარმოდგენილი რეკომენდაციების გათვალისწინებას სწავლების პროცესში?
4. როგორ დაახასიათებდით სწავლების კომუნიკაციურ მეთოდს, მის ძირითად პრინციპებს, სწავლების მიზნებსა და აქტივობებს?
5. როგორ გესმით, რა არის „კომუნიკაციის უნარი“, და ფორმით შეიძლება განვავითაროთ უცხო ენის მოსწავლეებში ეს კომპეტენცია?
6. რა მეთოდს ეფუძნება სახელმძღვანელო რომელსაც იყენებთ სწავლების პროცესში?
7. სახელმძღვანელოს გარდა, სხვა რა სახის მასალას იყენებთ სწავლების პროცესში?
8. რა სახის აქტივობებს ახორციელებთ სწავლების პროცესში?
9. რა წარმოადგენს თქვენთვის სწავლების პროცესში პრიორიტეტს – მოსწავლეებში ენობრივი უნარების განვითარება თუ უფრო ლინგვისტური ცოდნის მიწოდება?
10. როგორ დაახასიათებდით იმ მეთოდს რომელსაც იყენებთ?
11. რა ფორმით ახდენთ მოსწავლეთა წარმატების შეფასებას ენის სწავლების პროცესში წლის განმავლობაში? რას აქცევთ ყველაზე დიდ ყურადღებას შეფასებისას? (გრამატიკულ ცოდნას, ლექსიკის ცოდნას, ფონეტიკას, თუ მოსმენის, მეტყველების, კითხვის, წერის უნარებს).
12. ფიქრობთ თუ არა რომ მოსწავლის კომუნიკაციის უნარის შემოწმება მეტ სირთულეს უკავშირდება ვიდრე ენის გრამატიკისა და ლექსიკის ცოდნის შემოწმება?
13. რა სახის სირთულეებს აწყდებით სწავლების პროცესში? ფიქრობთ თუ არა რომ საქართველოში სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის განხორციელება მეტ სირთულეს უკავშირდება ვიდრე სწავლების ტრადიციული, გრამატიკაზე ორიენტირებული მეთოდის ?

APPENDIX 7.1B TEACHER INTERVIEW (TRANSLATION)

Personal data

Age: …
Sex: …
The name of the school …
What academic qualifications do you have? …
How long have you been teaching English? …
Have you had any formal training? …
Contact information (tel. number, e-mail)…

Interview questions:

1. Is there any document provided by the Ministry of Education which defines the methodology and standards that need to be followed in the language classroom?
2. Are you aware of the foreign language teaching methodology recommendations and the teaching/learning goals that the document (National Curriculum for Foreign Languages) provides?
3. How closely do you follow the official recommendations provided in the National Curriculum for Foreign Languages? If not, what do you use as your methodology guideline instead?
4. How would you describe Communicative Language Teaching? Its main principles, goals, procedures?
5. How would you interpret the concept of Communicative Competence, and what would you say are the best ways of developing Communicative Competence in language learners?
6. What method is the coursebook you are using in the class based upon?
7. What other, if any, teaching materials do you use in the class?
8. What type of activities do you use most often in the lesson?
9. Which language areas do you focus on most in the lesson (skills, grammar, vocabulary, phonetics)?
10. Overall, how would you describe your own classroom teaching – more grammar- or communication-driven?
11. How do you measure students' progress in English throughout the year? What kind of testing tools/system do you adopt? What do you focus upon while assessing learners (speaking, writing abilities, or grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, for instance) ?
12. Do you think testing learners' communicative competence is related to more challenges than testing learners' linguist knowledge is?
13. What difficulties do you encounter in the process of teaching? Would you say communicative language teaching is related to more challenges than grammar-driven type of teaching approach is?

APPENDIX: 7.2: TEACHER INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS FORM

School : _____ Teacher : _____

1. Awareness of the official recommendations 1/2/3

2. Understanding 1/2/3

3. Identified challenges

4. Overall Impression

APPENDIX 7.3A: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE (GEORGIAN)

კითხვარი მასწავლებლებისთვის

გვარი, სახელი:
სკოლის დასახელება:
საკონტაქტო ინფორმაცია:
(ტელეფონი, ელ. ფოსტა)

ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდი: ძირითადი პრინციპები

ხუთქულიანი შეფასების შკალაზე, მიუთითეთ თუ რამდენად ეთანხმებით ან არ ეთანხმებით წარმოდგენილ მოსაზრებებს; (დამატებითი კომენტარისათვის ან პასუხის დასაზუსტებლად, გამოიყენეთ კითხვის ქვემოთ მოცემული ხაზი)[2]

(1–კატეგორიულად არ ვეთანხმები; 2–არ ვეთანხმები; 3–მაქვს ნეიტრალური პოზიცია; 4–ვეთანხმები; 5–სავსებით ვეთანხმები)

<u>1.ენისა და სწავლის თეორია</u>

1. უცხო ენის სწავლების მთავარი მიზანია მოსწავლეს თავისუფალი მეტყველების უნარის განვითარებაში/ენის პრაქტიკულად გამოყენებაში შეუწყოს ხელი
2. უცხო ენის სწავლების მთავარი მიზანია მოსწავლეს გრამატიკულად გამართული მეტყველების განვითარებაში შეუწყოს ხელი
3. მნიშვნელოვანია მოსწავლეს დავეხმაროთ ისეთი კომუნიკაციური სტრატეგიების დაუფლებაში (ჟესტიკულაცია, პერეფრაზირება, ა.შ), რომელიც მას უცხო ენაზე კომუნიკაციისას წამოჭრილ სირთულეების გადალახვაში დაეხმარება.
4. უცხო ენას უფრო ადვილად ვსწავლობთ, როდესაც ენას ბუნებრივ გარემოში, ბუნებრივი გზით ვეუფლებით (იმ ქვეყანაში, სადაც შესასწავლ უცხო ენაზე მეტყველებენ, ამ ენაზე მოსაუბრე მეგობრებთან ურთიერთობით, ა.შ.)
5. უცხო ენის შესწავლა საკლასო ოთახში უფრო იოლია, როდესაც მასწავლებელი გიხსნის ენის წესებსა და ლექსიკას
6. ძალიან მნიშვნელოვანია მოსწავლეთათვის ენის ფუნქციების სწავლება (მისალმება, დამშვიდობება, მობოდიშება, ა.შ.)
7. სასურველია, რომ ენის სწავლების პროცესი ინგლისურ ენაზე მიმდინარეობდეს
8. მნიშვნელოვანია, რომ მოსწავლეების მეტყველება <u>*ზეპირად*</u> იყოს გამართული:
9. მნიშვნელოვანია, რომ მოსწავლეების მეტყველება <u>*გრამატიკულად*</u> იყოს გამართული
10. სწავლების პროცესში თითოეული მოსწავლის ინდივიდუალური სწავლის სტილი (ვიზუალური, სმენითი, კინესთეტური) უნდა იყოს გათვალისწინებული.
11. უცხო ენის სწავლისას უმთავრესია ენის უნარების შესწავლა (სმენის, მეტყველების, წერის და კითხვის).
12. უცხო ენის სწავლისას უმთავრესია ამ ენის გრამატიკის, ლექსიკისა და გამოთქმის შესწავლა.

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[2] დანართში წარმოდგენუილ კითხვარში არ არის მოცემული ორიგინალში არსებული ხუთქულიანი შკალის ამსახველი გრაფები.

ხუთბალიანი შეფასების შკალაზე, მიუთითეთ, თქვენი აზრით, რამდენად უწყობს ხელს წარმოდგენილი აქტივობები მითითებული უნარის განვითარებას:

4–ძალიან უწყობს ხელს; 3–უწყობს ხელს; 2–საშუალოდ უწყობს ხელს; 1–არ უწყობს ხელს; 0–სავსებით არ უწყობს ხელს.

კითხვის უნარი

ა. სტუდენტები კითხულობენ სავარჯიშოს წინადადებებს ____13

ბ. სტუდენტები განიხილავენ ტექსტთან დაკავშირებულ საკითხებს, მსჯელობენ; შემდგომ კითხულობენ ტექსტს ზოგადი ინფორმაცის მოსაპოვებლად, აჯამებენ პასუხებს; შემდგომ კითხულობენ იგივე ტექსტს დეტალური ინფორმაცის მოსაპოვებლად; მოსწავლეები მსჯელობენ წაკითხულ ტექსტში წარმოდგენილი ინფორმაციის ირგვლივ ____ 14

სმენის უნარი

ა. მასწავლებელი კითხულობს ტექსტს სახელმძღვანელოდან, მოსწავლეები უსმენენ____15

ბ. მოსწავლეები ისმენენ ინფორმაციას ინტერნეტით; შემდგომ მსჯელობენ. ისმენენ ინფორმაციას ხმლეორედ, დეტალების დასაზუსტებლად; გამოთქვამენ პირად აზრს მიღებულ ინფორმაციასთან დაკავშირებით ____16

მეტყველების უნარი

ა. მოსწალეები ერთმანეთს შეკითხვებს უსვამენ სახელმძღვანელოდან____ 17

ბ. სტუდენტები აწყობენ დებატებს მწვავე საკითხის ირგვლივ ____ 18

წერის უნარი

ა. მოწავლეები დაფიდან იწერენ წინადადებებს____19

ბ. მოსწავლეები წერენ ელექტრონულ წერილს ვირტუალურ მეგობარს ინგლისში ____ 20

2.პროგრამის სტრუქტურა და სილაბუსი

21. ენის სწავლების პროგრამა უნდა მიჰყვებოდეს სკოლის ადმინისტრაციის/სამინისტროს მიერ მოწოდებული სახელმძღვანელოს
22. მნიშვნელოვანია კონკრეტული ჯგუფის ინდივიდუალური ინტერესებისა და შესაძლებლობების გათვალისწინება და პროგრამის შესაბამისი ადაპტირება
23. მნიშვნელოვანია კონკრეტული ჯგუფის ინდივიდუალური შესაძლებლობების გათვალისწინება და პროგრამის შესაბამისი ადაპტირება
24. შუალედური და საბოლოო ტესტირებისას, უნდა შემოწმდეს მოსწავლეების ენობრივი უნარები- მოსმენა, კითხვა, წერა, მეტყველება
25. შუალედური და საბოლოო ტესტირებისას უნდა შემოწმდეს მოსწავლეების ლინგვისტური ცოდნა – გრამატიკა, ლექსიკა, ფონეტიკა

3.მასწავლებლისა და მოსწავლის როლი

25. მნიშვნელოვანია მასწავლებელი იყოს კეთილგანწყობილი და მეგობრული სწავლების
26. მასწავლებელი უნდა იყოს საკლასო ოთახში ყურადრების ცენტრში და არა მოსწავლე
27. მოსწავლე უნდა იყოს სწავლების პროცესში ყურადღების ცენტრში და არა მასწავლებელი
28. მასწავლებელი სათანადოდ უნდა რეაგირებდეს სწავლის პროცესში მოსწავლეების მხრიდან სპონტანურად წამოჭრილ საჭიროებებზე

29. მოსწავლეები სწავლის პროცესში უნდა აქტიურობდნენ –სვავდნენ შეკითხვებს, იჩენდნენ ინიციატივას, ცდილობდნენ მათთვის საჭირო ინფორმაციის მოპოვებას
30. მოსწავლეები უნდა გრძნობდნენ სწავლის პროცესში საკუთარ პასუხისმგებლობას

4.საკლასო ოთახში ურთიერთობის ფორმატი

31. სწავლის პორცესში ძირითადად მოსწვლეებს შორის უნდა ხორციელდებოდეს ურთიერთობა
32. სწავლის პორცესში ძირითადად მასწავლებელსა და მოსწავლეებს შორის უნდა ხორციელდებოდეს ინტერაქცია
33. გაკვეთილზე ძირითადად მოსწავლეები უნდა საუბრობდნენ
34. გაკვეთილზე ძირითადად მასწავლებელი უნდა საუბრობდეს
35. წყვილებში/ჯგუფებში მუშაობა მეტად ეფექტურს ხდის ენის სწავლის პროცესს
36. წყვილებში/ჯგუფებში მუშაობა ხელს უწყობს მოსწავლეებს შორის ბუნებრივ ინტერაქციას
37. საკლასო ოთახში სასიამოვნო, არასტრესული ატმოსფერო უნდა იყოს

5.შეცდომების გასწორება

38. აუცილებელია მოსწავლის ყოველი შეცდომის გასწორება
39. მასწავლებელი მოსწავლეებს საშუალებას უნდა აძლევდეს თვითონ სცადონ დაშვებული შეცდომების გასწორება
40 მასწავლებელი მოსწავლეს არ უნდა აწყვეტინებდეს საუბარს (დისკუსიისას, დებატებისას), და დაშვებულ შეცდომას მოგვიანებით უსწორებდეს

6. სასწავლო მასალა და აქტივობები

41. სწავლების პროცესში შეძლებისდაგვარად მეტი აუთენტური სასწავლო მასალა (ჟურნალები, გაზეთები, წიგნები-ორიგინალში) უნდა გამოიყენებოდეს
42. როლური თამაშები და სიმულაციები ხელს უწყობს ენის კომუნიკაციური გზით შესწავლას
43. აქტივობა ჭეშმარიტად კომუნიკაციური ხასიათისაა, როცა ხდება მოსწავლეებს შორის მათთვის უცნობი ინფორმაციის გაცვლა
44. აქტივობა ჭეშმარიტად კომუნიკაციური ხასიათისაა, როცა მოსწავლეს საუბრისას აქვს თავისუფალი არჩევანი – თვითონ ირჩევს სათქმელის შინაარსსა და ფორმას
45. აქტივობა, რომელიც ტექსტში გამოტოვებული ადგილების შევსებას და წარმოდგენილი პასუხებიდან სწორი ვარიანტის შემოხაზვაში მდგომარეობს, (gap-fill and multiple-choice exerices) მოსწავლის *მხოლოდ ლინგვისტურ* ცოდნას (და არა უნარებს) ავითარებს
46. ისეთი სახის აქტივობები, როგორიცაა: დებატები, დისკუსიები, პრეზენტაციები – მოსწავლეში თავისუფლად მეტყველების უნარს ავითარებს

7. უცხო ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენებასთან დაკავშირებული სირთულეები

47. იმისათვის, რომ ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენება შეძლოს, მასწავლებელი სრულყოფილად უნდა ფლობდეს იმ უცხო ენას, რომელსაც ასწავლის
48. მასწავლებელს კარგად უნდა ესმოდეს ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის ძირიტადი პრინციპები და თეორია
49. იმისათვის, რომ კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენება შეძლოს, მასწავლებელმა უნდა გაიაროს სპეციალური ტრეინინგი
50. არსებობს გარკვეული შიშის ფაქტორი მასწავლებლების მხრიდან სიახლეების პრაქტიკაში დანერგვასთან დაკავშირებით – გრამატიკაზე ორიენტირებული სწავლების ნაცვლად, ახალი, კომუნიკაციაზე ორიენტირებული მეთოდის გამოყებენა.
51. მასწავლებლებს ხშირად უჭირთ ტრადიციული მეთოდის გავლენისგან თავის დაღწევა, რადგან თვითონ ასეთი მეთოდით აქვთ ნასწავლი უცხო ენა, რაც მათ კომინუკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენებაში უშლით ხელს

სტუდენტებთან დაკავშირებული სირთულეები

52. ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდი საჭიროზე მეტ დამოუკიდებლობასა და ავტონომიას ანიჭებს მოსწავლეს სწავლის პროცესში
53. კომუნიკაციური აქტივობების წარმართვისას რთულია მოსწავლეების ჩართვა საუბარში (ზოგი მოსწავლე მორცხვია, ზოგს ლაპარაკი ეზარება, ა.შ.)
54. ძნელია აიძულო ქართველი მოსწავლეები ერთმანეთში უცხო ენაზე ისაუბრონ უცხო ენის გაკვეთილზე, როცა იციან, რომ თანამოსაუბრეს ქართული ენა უკეთ ესმის
55. კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენება ენის ცოდნის სხვადასხვა დონის მქონე მოსწავლეებთან დიდ სირთულეებს უკავშირდება

სხვა სირთულეები

56. მოსწავლეთა დიდ ჯგუფთან კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენება სირთულეებს უკავშირდება (ხმაური, დისციპლინის პრობლემები, მასწავლებლის ყურადღების თანაბრად გადანაწილება, საკმარისი სივრცე საკლასო ოთახში)
57. საგამოცდო სისტემა, რომელიც მოსწავლეების გრამატიკისა და ლექსიკის ცოდნას ამოწმებს, ნეგატიურ გავლენას ახდენს ენის სწავლების კონმუნიკაციურ ხასიათზე
58. იმისათვის, რომ ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდი იქნას გამოყენებული საჭიროა გარკვეული აღჭურვილობა (კომპიუტერი, ინტერნეტი, დვდ პლეიერი, ა.შ.), რისი უქონლობაც ართულებს ამ მეთოდის გამოყენებას
59. ენის სწავლების კომუნიკაციური მეთოდის გამოყენებას წინასწარ განსაზღვრული სავალდებულო სასწავლო გეგმა ართულებს (მასწავლებელი ვერ ერგება მოსწავლეების ინდივიდუალურ საჭიროებებს და ინტერესებს)
60. კომუნიკაციურ აქტივობების ჩატარებას დიდი დრო სჭირდება, რაც ხშირად დროის უკმარისობის პრობლემას ქმნის
61. მოსწავლეების კომუნიკაციური უნარების შემოწმება მასწავლებლის მხრიდან მეტ ძალისხმევასა და გამოცდილებას მოითხოვს, ვიდრე ტრადიციულ, გრამატიკულ სავარჯიშოებსა და ლექსიკაზე დაფუძნებული გამოცდის ფორმა

APPENDIX 7.3B: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE (TRANSLATION)

Personal data

Full name: …
School name: …
Age: …
Sex: …
Specialization Academic degree: …
Language teaching experience: …
Contact information: …

On a five point scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the below presented statements (1–strongly disagree; 2–disagree; 3–have a neutral position; 4–agree; 5–strongly agree)[3]

1. Language and learning theory

1. Developing students' fluency is very important
2. Developing students' accuracy is very important
3. It is important to develop in learners the ability to avoid communication break-down - coping strategies, which can keep communication going when language knowledge is still imperfect (gestures, paraphrasing, etc)
4. Languages are learned better when they are acquired (picked up without much formal information input) rather than learned (in a formal way)

[3] The questionnaire presented in this appendix does not include five-scale boxes presented in the original questionnaire.

5. Languages are better learned in a formal setting (classroom) when the rules of the language are explained by the teacher
6. It is very important that students are tught language functions, such as greeting, apologizing, etc
7. It is desirable that the target foreign language is spoken in the classroom
8. It is more important that the target foreign language that the learner uses *was meaningful* than grammatically correct
9. It is more important that the target foreign language that the learner uses *was grammatically correct* than meaningful
10. In the process of teaching, individual learners' needs should be considered
11. It is very important to teach learners language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing)
12. It is very important to teach learners grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation

In a five-point scale, mark how much you think the below presented activities help develop the indicated language skill

4–helps greatly; **3–**helps; **2**–helps to some extent; **1**–does not help much; **0**–does not help at all

Reading skill

a. Students read out sentences of the exercise _____13.
b. Students discuss the issues related to the reading passage, make predictions; after reading the text, students check their guesses and answer comprehension questions and discuss_____14.

Listening

a. Teacher reads out a text from the coursebook, students listen and answer questions teacher asks about the text_____15.
b. Students listen to the BBC episode; they discuss the information they got. They listen the second time for more details_____16.

Speaking

a. Students ask each other questions from the coursebook_____17.
b. Students hold a debate about a controversial issue_____18.

Writing

a. Students write downs sentences from the board/coursebook_____19.
b. Students write an e-mail to a virtual friend in England _____ 20.

2. Course design and syllabus

On a five point scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the below presented statements (1–strongly disagree; 2–disagree; 3–have a neutral position; 4–agree; 5–strongly agree)[4]

21. It is important to cater to the individual interest of a group and adapt the syllabus accordingly
22. It is important to take into account the abilities of individual group members and adapt the syllabus accordingly
23. In the mid-term and final language tests, learners' language skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening) should be tested
24. In the mid-term and final language tests, learners' grammar, vocabulary or phonology should be tested.

3.Teacher's and leaner's roles and characteristics

25. It is extremely important that the teacher is friendly and encouraging in the lesson
26. The teacher should be the center of attention in the lesson, not the learner
27. The learner should be the center of attention in the lesson, not the teacher

[4] The questionnaire presented in this appendix does not include five-scale boxes presented in the original questionnaire.

28. Teacher should be reactive to students' spontaneous needs
29. Students should be active in the lesson – taking initiative, asking for information, seeking clarification, expressing opinions, debating
30. Students should be responsible for their own learning
31. There should be mostly student-student interaction in the language classroom
32. There should be mostly teacher-student interaction in the language classroom
33. There should be mostly student talking (ST) in the language classroom
34. There should be mostly teacher talking (TT) in the language classroom
35. By working in pairs/groups learners learn from one another
36. Working in pairs/groups contributes to natural interaction and meaningful language production among learners in the language classroom
37. The atmosphere in the classroom should be fun, stimulating and stress-free

5. Error correction

38. It is important to correct learners' every error immediately
39. It is a good idea to encourage learners to self-correct/peer-correct
40. The teacher should not interrupt and should provide the delayed feedback/correction when pupils are engaged in a free speaking activity (debate, discussion, presentation)

6. Materials and activities

41. As many authentic materials should be used as possible
42. Role-playing and simulations are a very good way to practice the language communicatively
43. A truly communicative activity is characterized by information gap and freedom of choice
44. A truly communicative activity is characterized by freedom of expression – learners' can choose the contents as well as the form of the message they want to deliver
45. Activities, like fill in the gaps, multiple choice tests, question and answer, do not promote fluency in the language learner
46. Debates, discussions, presentations promote the Communicative Competence in the language learner

7. CLT-related challenges

Teacher-related difficulties

47. Unless the teacher is proficient in the target foreign language, she/he will not be able to teach communicatively
48. Unless the teacher is well aware what exactly Communicative Competence means, she/he will not be able to efficiently apply CLT
49. Unless the teacher has had enough professional training it is difficult to efficiently apply CLT in the classroom
50. There is the fear of applying a new method on the part of the teacher
51. It is often difficult for a teacher to overcome the influence of the traditional way of teaching that she/he was herself/himself exposed to

Learner-related difficulties

52. CLT delegates too much independence and autonomy to the learner in the process of learning
53. It is difficult to involve all students in communicative activities (some are shy, reserved, are lazy to speak out and be active, etc)
54. It is difficult to make Georgian learners speak in the target foreign language among themselves
55. Learners with mixed levels and abilities are especially difficult to deal with in the CLT classroom.

Other difficulties

56. Applying CLT with large groups of students often results in difficulties (noise, discipline problems, lack of individual attention, not enough space)

57. The examination system, which focuses of testing learners' knowledge of language forms (grammar and vocabulary), negatively affects teachers'/learners' motivation to use CLT
58. Special teaching equipment is needed to apply CLT in the language classroom (a computer, a CD player, the Internet, etc)
59. The officially pre-defined language curriculum to which language teachers have to adhere does not contribute to CLT application in the classroom (teachers cannot adapt teaching materials or cater to students' individual needs and interests)
60. CLT activities can be time consuming, which often result in lack of teaching time
61. It is much more difficult to assess learners' communicative skills than grammar or vocabulary

APPENDIX: 7.4: INTERVIEW RESULTS: CLT-RELATED DIFFICULTIES

Low language proficiency makes it difficult for teachers to practice CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	16	76.2
I am facing this problem	5	23.8
Total	21	100

There is an influence of the older methods

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	19	90.5
I am facing this problem	2	9.5
Total	21	100

The fear of applying a novel method of teaching

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	11	52.4
I am facing this problem	10	47.6
Total	21	100

A better theoretical understanding of CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	17	81.0
I am facing this problem	4	19.0
Total	21	100

Learners are given too much independence in the learning process

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	21	100

It is difficult to involve all learners in the study process

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	9	42.9
I am facing this problem	12	57.1
Total	21	100

Learners with mixed levels and abilities are difficult to deal with

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	12	57.1
I am facing this problem	9	42.9
Total	21	100

There are not enough methodology trainings

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	11	52.4
I am facing this problem	10	47.6
Total	21	100

Lack of teaching resources

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	3	14.3
I am facing this problem	18	85.7
Total	21	100

Little time to cover the course

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	11	52.4
I am facing this problem	10	47.6
Total	21	100

Examination system which focuses on testing knowledge about language forms

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	20	95.2
I am facing this problem	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Pre-determined syllabus which makes CLT application difficult

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	21	100

It is difficult to apply CLT with large classes

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	4	19.0
I am facing this problem	17	81.0
Total	21	100

CLT takes much preparation time

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	15	71.4
I am facing this problem	6	28.6
Total	21	100

CLT-related classroom management problems

	Frequency	Percentage
I am not facing this problem	3	14.3
I am facing this problem	18	85.7
Total	21	100

APPENDIX 7.5: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLT[5]

1. Developing students' fluency is very important

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	3	3.1
Agree	22	22.9
Strongly Agree	71	74.0
Total	96	100.0

2. Developing students' accuracy is very important

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1
Disagree	15	15.6
Neutral	22	22.9
Agree	35	36.5
Strongly Agree	21	21.9
Total	96	100.0

3. It is important to develop in learners the ability to avoid communication break-down – coping strategies which can keep communication going when language knowledge is still imperfect (gestures, paraphrasing, etc)

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	5	5.2
Agree	32	33.3
Strongly Agree	56	58.3
Total	96	100.0

4. Languages are learned better when they are acquired (picked up without much formal information input) rather than learned (in a formal way)

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	3	3.1
Agree	16	16..7
Strongly Agree	75	78.1
Total	96	100.0

5. Languages are better learned in a formal setting (classroom) when the rules of the language are explained by the teacher

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	22	22.9
Neutral	24	25.0
Agree	35	36.5
Strongly Agree	14	14.6
Total	96	100.0

[5] The numbering of the items in this appendix follow that of the original questionnaire (see Appendix 7.3).

6. It is very important that students are taught language functions, such as, greeting, apologizing

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	8	8.3
Agree	28	29.2
Strongly Agree	58	60.4
Total	96	100.0

7. It is desirable that the target foreign language is spoken in the classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	4	4.2
Neutral	4	4.2
Agree	26	27.1
Strongly Agree	61	63.5
Total	96	100.0

8. It is important that the target foreign language that the learner uses is meaningful

	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	51	53.1
Strongly Agree	45	46.9
Total	96	100.0

9. It is important that the target foreign language that the learner uses is grammatically correct

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	9	9.4
Agree	61	63.5
Strongly Agree	24	25.0
Total	96	100.0

10. In the process of teaching. individual needs of learners should be considered

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	4	4.2
Neutral	7	7.3
Agree	39	40.6
Strongly Agree	45	46.9
Total	96	100.0

11. It is very important to teach learners language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing)

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	14	14.6
Strongly Agree	81	84.4
Total	96	100.0

12. It is very important to teach learners grammar, lexis and pronunciation[6]

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	4	4.2
Agree	27	28.1
Strongly Agree	64	66.7
Total	96	100.0

[6]Items 13 – 20, dealing with CLT activities, are presented separately in Appendix 7.6.

21. It is important to cater to individual interests of a group and adapt the syllabus accordingly

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	4	4.2
Neutral	9	9.4
Agree	33	34.4
Strongly Agree	50	52.1
Total	96	100.0

22. It is important to cater to individual abilities of a group and adapt the syllabus accordingly

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	13	13.5
Agree	39	40.6
Strongly Agree	44	45.8
Total	96	100.0

23. In the mid-term and final language tests, learners' language skills should be tested- speaking, writing, reading and listening

	Frequency	Percentage
Useful	3	3.1
Very useful	93.1	96.9
Total	96	100.0

24. In the mid-term and final language tests, learners' linguistic knowledge should be tested – grammar, vocabulary or phonology

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	16	16.7
Agree	33	34.4
Strongly Agree	44	45.8
Total	96	100.0

25. It is extremely important that the teacher is friendly and encouraging in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	11	11.5
Strongly Agree	84	87.5
Total	96	100.0

26. The teacher should be the center of attention in the lesson, not the learner

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little use	11	11.5
Useful to some extent	55	57.3
Useful	18	18.8
Very useful	15	12.5
Total	96	100.0

27. The learner should be the centre of attention in the lesson, not the teacher

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	7	7.3
Agree	30	31.3
Strongly Agree	58	60.4
Total	96	100.0

28. Teacher should be reactive to students' spontaneous needs

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1
Disagree	12	12.5
Neutral	33	34.4
Agree	24	25.0
Strongly Agree	25	26.0
Total	96	100.0

29. Learners should be active in the lesson – showing initiative, asking for information and expressing one's own opinions

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	3	3.1
Agree	12	12.5
Strongly Agree	81	84.4
Total	96	100.0

30. Students should be responsible for their own learning

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	7	7.3
Strongly Agree	88	91.7
Total	96	100.0

31. There should be mostly student-student interaction in the language classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	15	15.6
Neutral	34	35.4
Agree	22	22.9
Strongly Agree	25	26.0
Total	96	100.0

32. There should be mostly student-student interaction in the language classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little use	4	4.2
Useful to some extent	10	10.4
Useful	21	21.9
Very useful	61	63.3
Total	96	100.0

33. There should be mostly student talking (ST) in the language classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	4	4.2
Neutral	6	6.3
Agree	43	44.8
Strongly Agree	42	43.8
Total	96	100.0

34. There should be mostly teacher talking (TT) in the language classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little use	12	12.5
Useful to some extent	47	49.0
Useful	26	27.1
Very useful	11	11.5
Total	96	100.0

35. By working in pairs/groups learners learn from one another

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	48	50.0
Strongly Agree	46	47.9
Total	96	100.0

36. Working in pairs/groups contributes to natural interaction and meaningful language production among learners in the language classroom

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	33	34.4
Strongly Agree	62	64.6
Total	96	100.0

37. The atmosphere in the classroom should be fun, stimulating and stress-free

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	2	2.1
Agree	12	12.5
Strongly Agree	81	84.4
Total	96	100.0

38. It is important to correct learners' every error immediately

	Frequency	Percentage
Very little use	7	7.3
Useful to some extent	33	34.4
Useful	18	18.8
Very useful	38	39.5
Tota l	96	100.0

39. It is a good idea to encourage learners to self-correct/peer-correct

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	2	2.1
Agree	48	50.0
Strongly Agree	44	45.8
Total	96	100.0

40. The teacher should not interrupt and should provide the delayed feedback/correction when pupils are engaged in a free speaking activity (debate, discussion, presentation)

	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	39	40.6
Strongly Agree	56	58.3
Total	96	100.0

41. As many authentic materials should be used as possible

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	3	3.1
Neutral	14	14.6
Agree	46	47.9
Strongly Agree	33	34.4
Total	96	100.0

42. Role-playing and simulations are a very good way to practice the language communicatively

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	4	4.1
Agree	36	37.5
Strongly Agree	54	56.3
Total	96	100.0

43. Truly communicative activity is characterized by information gap

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	7	7.3
Neutral	14	14.6
Agree	43	44.8
Strongly Agree	32	33.3
Total	96	100.0

44. A truly communicative activity is characterized by freedom of expression –learners choose what to say themselves

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	7	7.3
Neutral	21	21.9
Agree	42	43.8
Strongly Agree	26	27.1
Total	96	100.0

45. Activities, like fill in the gaps, multiple choice tests, question and answer, do not promote fluency in the language learner

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	4.2
Disagree	30	31.3
Neutral	18	18.8
Agree	29	30.2
Strongly Agree	15	15.6
Total	96	100.0

46. Debates, discussions, presentations promote the communicative competence in the language learner

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	26	27.1
Strongly Agree	68	0.8
Total	96	100.0

APPENDIX 7.6: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: TEACHERS' EVALUATIONS OF LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES[7]

13. Students read out the sentences of an exercise

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	10	10.4
Very little use	18	18.8
Useful to some extent	36	37.5
Useful	30	31.3
Very useful	2	2.1
Total	96	100.0

14. Students discuss the issues related to the reading passage, make predictions; after reading the text, students check their guesses and answer comprehension questions

	Frequency	Percentage
Useful to some extent	4	4.2
Useful	8	8.3
Very useful	84	87.5
Total	96	100.0

15. Teacher reads out a text from the course book, students listen and answer questions, teacher asks about the text

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	7	7.3
Very little use	11	11.5
Useful to some extent	47	49.0
Useful	17	17.7
Very useful	14	14.6
Total	96	100.0

16. Students listen to the BBC episode; they discuss the information they got, they listen the second time for more details

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	2	2.1
Very little use	2	2.1
Useful to some extent	5	5.2
Useful	19	19.8
Very useful	68	70.8
Total	96	100.0

17. Students ask each other questions from the course book

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	4	4.2
Very little use	9	9.4
Useful to some extent	32	33.3
Useful	27	28.1
Very useful	24	25.0
Total	96	100.0

[7]The numbering of the items in this appendix follows that of the original questionnaire (see Appendix 7.3).

18. Students hold a debate about a controversial issue

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	1	1.0
Useful to some extent	5	5.2
Useful	10	10.4
Very useful	80	83.3
Total	96	100.0

19. Students write down sentences from the board/course book

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	9	9.4
Very little use	20	20.8
Useful to some extent	42	43.8
Useful	17	17.7
Very useful	8	8.3
Total	96	100.0

20. Students write an e-mail to a virtual friend

	Frequency	Percentage
Not useful at all	1	1.0
Very little use	1	1.0
Useful to some extent	5	5.2
Useful	29	30.2
Very useful	60	62.5
Total	96	100.0

APPENDIX 7.7: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: TEACHERS' EVALUATIONS OF CLT-RELATED DIFFICULTIES

47. Unless the teacher is proficient in the target foreign language, she/he will not be able to teach communicatively

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1	1.0
Neutral	2	2.1
Agree	15	15.6
Strongly Agree	78	81.3
Total	96	100.0

48. Unless the teacher is well aware what exactly Communicative Competence means, she/he will not be able to efficiently apply CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	2	2.1
Neutral	2	2.1
Agree	38	39.6
Strongly Agree	54	56.3
Total	96	100.0

49. Unless the teacher has had a professional teachers' training in methodology, she/he will not be able to teach communicatively

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	6	6.3
Neutral	14	14.6
Agree	41	42.7
Strongly Agree	35	36.5
Total	96	100.0

50. There is fear of applying a new method on the part of the teacher

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1
Disagree	9	9.4
Neutral	18	18.8
Agree	31	32.3
Strongly Agree	35	36.5
Total	96	100.0

51. It is often difficult for a teacher to overcome the influence of the traditional way of teaching that she/he was herself/himself exposed to

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	8.3
Disagree	18	18.8
Neutral	21	21.9
Agree	31	32.3
Strongly Agree	18	18.8
Total	96	100.0

52. CLT delegates too much independence and autonomy to the learner in the process of learning

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	4.2
Disagree	33	34.4
Neutral	30	31.3
Agree	17	17.7
Strongly Agree	12	12.5
Total	96	100.0

53. It is difficult to involve all students in communicative activities (some are shy, reserved, are lazy to speak out and be active, etc)

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	24	25.0
Neutral	12	12.5
Agree	42	43.8
Strongly Agree	17	17.7
Total	96	100.0

54. It is difficult to make Georgian learners speak in the target foreign language among themselves

	Flequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1
Disagree	19	19.8
Neutral	23	24.0
Agree	35	36.5
Strongly Agree	17	17.7
Total	96	100.0

55. Learners with mixed levels and abilities are especially difficult to deal with in CLT Lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	5	5.2
Neutral	10	10.4
Agree	49	51.0
Strongly Agree	32	33.3
Total	96	100.0

56. Applying CLT with large groups of students often results in difficulties (noise, discipline problems, lack of individual attention, not enough space)

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	5	5.2
Neutral	10	10.4
Agree	50	52.1
Strongly Agree	31	32.3
Total	96	100.0

57. The examination system, which focuses of testing learners' knowledge of language forms negatively affects teachers/learners motivation to use CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	8.3
Disagree	52	54.2
Neutral	20	20.8
Agree	10	10.4
Strongly Agree	6	6.3
Total	96	100.0

58. Special teaching equipment is needed to apply CLT in the language classroom (a computer, a CD player, the Internet, etc)

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	5	5.2
Neutral	8	8.3
Agree	32	33.3
Strongly Agree	50	52.1
Total	96	100.0

59. Officially pre-defined language curriculum to which language teachers have to adhere does not contribute to CLT application in the classroom (teachers cannot adapt teaching materials or cater to students' individual needs and interests)

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	3	3.1
Disagree	23	24.0
Neutral	30	31.3
Agree	31	32.3
Strongly Agree	9	9.4
Total	96	100.0

6**0. CLT activities can be time consuming, which often results in lack of teaching time**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	29	30.2
Neutral	19	19.8
Agree	35	36.5
Strongly Agree	12	12.5
Total	96	100.0

61. It is much more difficult to assess learners' communicative skills than grammar or vocabulary

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	2.1
Disagree	6	6.3
Neutral	7	7.3
Agree	42	43.8
Strongly Agree	39	40.6
Total	96	100.0

APPENDIX 8.1A: LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE (GEORGIAN)

კითხვარი მოსწავლეებისთვის

ნაწილი I

1. სახელი და გვარი
2. სკოლა
3. ასაკი რამდენი წელია ამ სკოლაში სწავლობთ? სად სწავლობდით მანამდე?
4. რამდენი წელია უცხო ენას სწავლობთ სკოლაში?
5. სკოლის გარეთ თუ გისწავლიათ უცხო ენა? (კერძო სკოლაში, კერძო მასწავლებელთან?) სად? რამდენი წელი?

შემოხაზეთ ა. ან ბ. ან ორივე ვარიანტი

ა. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ მაშინ, როდესაც უცხო ენის გაკვეთილზე ქართულად ვსაუბრობ.
ბ. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ მაშინ, როდესაც უცხო ენის გაკვეთილზე უცხო ენაზე ვსაუბრობ.

ა. უკეთესად მესმის ტექსტი, როდესაც ტექსტის ირგვლივ ვმსჯელობთ, და მერე ვკითხულობთ და ახალი სიტყვების მნიშვნელობის გამოცნობას თავად ვცდილობ და შემდეგ მასწავლებელთან ერთად განვიხილავ.
ბ. უკეთესად მესმის ტექსტი, როდესაც ტექსტს და უცხო სიტყვებს ვიზეპირებ.

ა. გაკვეთილზე საუბრისას, მეტ ყურადღებას ვაქცევ იმას, თუ რაზე ვსაუბრობ.
ბ. გაკვეთილზე საუბრისას, მეტ ყურადღებას ვაქცევ იმას, თუ რამდენად სწორად ვამბობ სათქმელს.

ა. მირჩევნია მასწავლებელი არ მაწყვეტინებდეს საუბარს და შეცდომებს მოგვიანებით მისწორებდეს.
ბ. მირჩევნია მასწავლებელი ყველა ჩემ შეცდომას საუბრის დროსვე მისწორებდეს.

ა. უკეთესია, როდესაც მასწავლებელი მაძლევს შესაძლებლობას და მეხმარება დაშვებული შეცდომა თვითონ გავასწორო.
ბ. უკეთესია, როდესაც მასწავლებელი თვითონ მისწორებს შეცდომებს.

ა. გაკვეთილზე მეტწილად მოსწავლეები უნდა ურთიერთობდნენ ერთმანეთში.
ბ. გაკვეთილზე მასწავლებელი უნდა იყოს ყურადღების ცენტრში და იგი უნდა წარმართავდეს გაკვეთილს.

ა. გაკვეთილზე ძირითადად მასწავლებელი უნდა საუბრობდეს.
ბ. გაკვეთილზე მეტწილად მოსწავლეები უნდა საუბრობდნენ.

ა. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ და ნაკლებად დაძაბული ვარ, როდესაც დავალებებს კლასში წყვილებში/ჯგუფებში ვასრულებთ.
ბ. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ, როდესაც დავალებებს კლასში მარტო ვასრულებ.

ა. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ, როდესაც გაკვეთილზე ვვაქტიურობ: ვსვამ შეკითხვებს, ვითხოვ განმარტებას, განვმარტავ საკუთარ აზრს.
ბ. უკეთესად ვსწავლობ, როდესაც გაკვეთილზე ჩემთვის, ჩუმად ვზივარ და მარტო ვმუშაობ; ვსაუბრობ მხოლოდ მაშინ, როდესაც მასწავლებელი მოითხოვს ამას.

ა. მასწავლებელი ბავშვებს უნდა აძლევდეს საშუალებას თავითონ მიხვდნენ კონტექსტიდან თუ როგორ მოქმედებს ესა თუ ის წესი.
ბ. მასწავლებელმა წესი მოსწავლეებს თვითონ უნდა აუხსნას.

ა. მასწავლებელი მეგობრული და კეთილგანწყობილი უნდა იყოს.
ბ. მასწავლებელი უნდა იყოს მკაცრი და მომთხოვნი.

ა. მასწავლებელი თითოეულ მოსწავლეს ინდივიდუალურ ყურადღებას უნდა აქცევდეს.
ბ. მასწავლებელი მთლიანობაში კლასს უნდა ასწავლიდეს და თითოეული მოსწავლის პრობლემაზე გაკვეთილზე დროს არ უნდა კარგავდეს.

ა. გაკვეთილზე მეტი ყურადღება ენის უნარების (საუბარი, მოსმენა, წერა, კითხვა) განვითარებას უნდა ეთმობოდეს.
ბ. გაკვეთილზე მეტი დრო გრამატიკის, ლექსიკისა და ფონეტიკის შესწავლას უნდა ეთმობოდეს.

ა. უკეთესია გამოცდაზე ენის უნარები (საუბარი, მოსმენა, წერა, კითხვა) მოწმდებოდეს.
ბ. უკეთესია გამოცდაზე გრამატიკის, ლექსიკისა და ფონეტიკის ცოდნა მოწმდებოდეს.

ა. სწავლის პროცესს სასიამოვნოს ხდის ისეთი სასწავლო მასალის გამოყენება, როგორიცაა ჟურნალი უცხო ენაზე, გაზეთი, სტატია ინტერნეტიდან.
ბ. სწავლება მხოლოდ სახელმძღვანელოს მიხედვით უნდა ხორციელდებოდეს.

ა. გაკვეთილზე მინდა ვსწავლობდე იმას, რასაც ვიცი რომ გამოცდაზე მომთხოვენ
ბ. გაკვეთილზე მინდა მასწავლიდნენ იმას, რაც ვიცი, რომ რეალურ ცხოვრებაში გამომადგება

ა. ისეთი აქტივობა, რომელიც რეალურ ცხვრებაში არსებულ სიტუაციას ჰგავს, სწავლის პროცესს მეტად სასიამოვნოს და სასარგებლოს ხდის. (მაგ. სასურველი ინფორმაციის მოპოვება, არსებული პრობლემის გადაჭრა, დებატები, ა.შ.)
ბ. მარტივი, აქტივობები, როგორიცაა, კითხვა-პასუხი, დიალოგის დაზეპირება და შემდეგ გათამაშება, სავარჯიშოს შევსება, უფრო მარტივია და სწავლას მიადვილებს.

ხუთქულიანი შეფასების შკალაზე, მიუთითეთ თუ რამდენად მოგწონთ წარმოდგენილი აქტივობა:

(5–ძალიან მომწონს; 4–მომწონს; 3–მაქვს ნეიტრალური პოზიცია; 3–არ მომწონს; 1–ძალიან არ მომწონს)

დებატები და დისკუსიები——— წერილობითი გრამატიკული სავარჯიშოები ———
წერილობითი ლექსიკური სავარჯიშოები ——— პრეზენტაციები———
დაზეპირებული ტექსტის ჩაბარება ——— ენობრივი თამაშები ———
როლური თამაშები——— კარნახი———

ნაწილი 2

გაკვეთილზე უცხო ენაზე საუბარი რთულია

ვეთანხმები	არ ვეთანხმები	მიჭირს პასუხის გაცემა

ქართველ თანაკლასელთან უცხო ენაზე საუბარი უხერხულობას მიქმნის

ვეთანხმები	არ ვეთანხმები	მიჭირს პასუხის გაცემა

როდესაც ჯგუფში ბევრი ბავშვია, ეს სწავლაში მიშლის ხელს

ვეთანხმები	არ ვეთანხმები	მიჭირს პასუცის გაცემა

არ მაინტერესებს ისეთი სასწავლო მასალა, რომელიც ჩემთვის უცნობ სიტუაციებს და გარემოს ეხება

ვეთანხმები	არ ვეთანხმები	მიჭირს პასუხის გაცემა

წყვილებში/ჯგუფებში მუშაობა ხმაურს იწვევს, რაც სწავლაში მიშლის ხელს.

ვეთანხმები	არ ვეთანხმები	მიჭირს პასუხის გაცემა

APPENDIX 8.1B: LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:
2. School:
3. Grade:
4. Age:
5. When did you start studying a foreign language in school?
6. Had you studied the language before that elsewhere?
7. Do you have any exposure to foreign language teaching outside the school? Where?

Section 1: CLT conceptions

Circle the letter (a. or b. or both) which corresponds to your preference

1. Learning theory

(1)
a. I learn better when Georgian is spoken in the class
b. I learn better when a foreign language is spoken in the class

(2)
a. While working on the text, I learn better when I discuss the text and analyze the vocabulary
b. While working on a text, I learn better when I memorize the text and list of vocabulary

(3).
a. It is more important to pay attention to the meaning of what you are saying
b. It is more important to pay attention to the correct form of what you are saying

(4).
a. I learn better when the teacher makes us guess/deduce the meaning of language forms ourselves
b. I learn better when the teacher explains rules herself/himself

2. Error correction

(5)
a. I would rather the teacher did not interrupt me and corrected mistakes afterwards
b. I would rather the teacher corrected all my mistakes while I am speaking

(6)
a. It is more useful when the teacher makes us to selfcorrect
b. It is more useful when the teacher corrects our mistakes herself/himself

4. Classroom interaction

(7).
a. There should be more student-student interaction
b. There should be more teacher-student interaction

(8)
a. There should be more teacher talking time
b. There should be more student talking time

(9)
a. I learn better and feel more relaxed when I work in pairs/groups
b. I learn better and feel more relaxed when I work on my own

4. Teachers' and learners roles

(10)
a. I learn better when I am active: when I take the initiative, express my opinion
b. I learn better when I sit quietly, working on my own and speak out when the teacher calls on me.

(11)
a. The teacher should be friendly and encouraging
b. The teacher should be strict and demanding

(12)

a. The teacher should pay individual attention to each student

b. The teacher should teach the class as a whole, and not worry about needs of each student

5. Syllabus and course design

(13)

a. In the lesson, more time has to be dedicated to developing language skills

b. In the lesson, more time has to be dedicated to teaching grammar, vocabulary and phonology

(14)

a. It would be better if language skills were tested at the exam

b. It would be better if grammar, vocabulary and phonology were tested at the exam

(15)

a. I would like to be taught the language and skills that I will need in real life

b. I would like to be taught the language and skills that will be tested at final exams

6. Teaching material and language activities:

(16)

a. I like when the material is authentic – the Internet resources, magazines, newspapers, etc.

b. I like when the material comes from the coursebooks or other academic source.

(17)

a. Activities which resemble real life task help me more in the learning process

b. Activities which are structured, straightforward, like asking and answering the questions from the coursebook, memorizing the dialogues, filling in the gaps, help me more in the learning process

Section 2

7. CLT versus Non-CLT activities

On a four-point evaluation scale, please indicate how much you like/do not like the below presented language activities:

(4–like very much; 3–like; 2–have neutral attitude; 1–do not like it; 0–do not like it at all)

18. Debates and discussions_____
19. Presentations____
20. Language games _____
21. Dialogues and role plays_____
22. Fill-in the gaps exercises_____
23. Reciting a memorized text _____
24. Written grammar/vocabulary exercises_____
25. Dictations_____

Section 3

8. CLT-related Challenges

Circle one of the options: 'agree', 'disagree', 'not sure'.

26. Learning in a foreign language is difficult for me

agree	disagree	not sure

27. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in a foreign language with a Georgian classmate

agree	disagree	not sure

28. Having many students in the group makes it difficult to learn a foreign language

agree	disagree	not sure

29. It is difficult for me to get interested in the material which is not related to my

agree	disagree	not sure

30. Speaking activities and pair/group work results in much noise, which makes it difficult for me to learn a language

agree	disagree	not sure

APPENDIX 8.2: FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

SECTION 1

Items 1–17: General CLT conceptions

1. It is better to have the foreign language spoken in the class than Georgian.

	Frequency	Percantage
Disagree	143	20.6
Not sure	105	15.2
Agree	445	64.2
Total	693	100

2. While working on the text, I learn better when I discuss the text and analyze the vocabulary afterwards rather than when I memorize the text and lists of vocabulary.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	39	5.6
Not sure	28	4.0
Agree	626	90.3
Total	693	100

3. It is more important to pay attention to the meaning of what you are saying than to the correct form.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	321	46.3
Not sure	182	26.3
Agree	190	27.4
Total	693	100

4. I learn better when the teacher makes us guess/deduce the meaning of language forms ourselves than when teacher explains rules.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	406	58.6
Not sure	88	12.7
Agree	199	28.7
Total	693	100

5. I would rather the teacher corrected the mistakes I make after I finish speaking rather than during speaking.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	349	50.4
Not sure	16	2.3
Agree	327	47.2
Total	693	100

6. It is more useful when the teacher makes us to selfcorrect than when the teacher corrects our mistakes herself/himself.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	95	13.7
Not sure	38	5.5
Agree	560	80.8
Total	693	100

7. There should be more student-student interaction than teacher-student interaction.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	461	66.5
Not sure	80	11.5
Agree	152	21.9
Total	693	100

8. There should be more student talking time than teacher talking time.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	307	44.3
Not sure	146	21.1
Agree	240	34.6
Total	693	100

9. I learn better and feel more relaxed when I work in pairs/groups than when I work on my own.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	218	31.5
Not sure	64	9.2
Agree	411	59.3
Total	693	100

10. I learn better when I am active in the lesson: take initiative, express my opinion, than when I sit quietly working on my own and only speak out when the teacher calls on me.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	12	17.6
Not sure	42	6.1
Agree	529	76.3
Total	693	100

11. The teacher should be friendly and encouraging rather than strict and demanding.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	85	12.3
Not sure	156	22.5
Agree	452	65.2
Total	693	100

12. The teacher should pay individual attention to each student rather than teach the class as a whole and not worry about needs of each individual student.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	242	34.9
Not sure	53	7.6
Agree	398	57.4
Total	693	100

13. In the lesson more time has to be dedicated to developing language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) than to teaching grammar, vocabulary and phonology.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	166	24.0
Not sure	240	34.6
Agree	287	41.4
Total	693	100

14. It would be better if language skills were tested at the exam than grammar, vocabulary and phonology.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	208	30.0
Not sure	172	24.8
Agree	313	45.2
Total	693	100

15. I would prefer to be taught the language and skills that I will need in real life than the language and skills that will be tested at final exams.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	364	52.5
Not sure	236	34.1
Agree	93	13.4
Total	693	100

16. I like when the material comes from outside the classroom - the Internet, magazines, newspapers than from the coursebook.

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	134	19.3
Not sure	59	8.5
Agree	500	72.2
Total	693	100

17. I prefer activities which prepare me for real life communication than activities which are more structured and academic in nature

	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	469	23.5
Not sure	60	8.7
Agree	163	67.7
Total	693	100

Section 2
Items 18-25: CLT and non-CLT language activities

18. Debates and discussions

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	30	4.3
I do not like it	18	2.6
have a neutral position	121	17.5
I like it	232	33.5
I like it very much	292	42.1
Total	693	100

19. Presentations

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	15	2.2
I do not like it	26	3.8
have a neutral position	69	10.0
I like it	161	23.2
I like it very much	422	60.9
Total	693	100

20. Language games

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	18	2.6
I do not like it	31	4.5
have a neutral position	100	14.4
I like it	198	28.6
I like it very much	346	49.9
Total	693	100

21. Dialogues and role plays

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	33	4.8
I do not like it	57	8.2
have a neutral position	145	20.9
I like it	179	25.8
I like it very much	279	40.3
Total	693	100

22. Fill-in the gaps exercises

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	30	4.3
I do not like it	58	8.4
have a neutral position	187	27.0
I like it	269	38.8
I like it very much	149	21.5
Total	693	100

23. Reciting a memorized text

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	197	28.4
I do not like it	132	19.0
have a neutral position	178	25.7
I like it	114	16.5
I like it very much	72	10.4
Total	693	100

24. Grammar/vocabulary exercises

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	29	4.2
I do not like it	44	6.3
have a neutral position	164	23.7
I like it	242	34.9
I like it very much	214	30.9
Total	693	100

25. Dictations

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not like it at all	165	23.8
I do not like it	121	17.5
have a neutral position	03	29.3
I like it	95	13.7
I like it very much	108	15.6
Total	693	100

Section 3

Items 26-30: CLT-related difficulties

26. It is difficult for me to study in a foreign language.

	Frequency	Percentage
I disagree	387	55.8
I am not sure	147	21.2
I agree	159	22.9
Total	693	100

27. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in a foreign language with a Georgian classmate.

	Frequency	Percentage
I disagree	485	70.0
I am not sure	84	12.1
I agree	124	17.9
Total	693	100

28. Having many students in the group makes it difficult to learn a foreign language.

	Frequency	Percentage
I disagree	280	40.4
I am not sure	100	14.4
I agree	313	45.2
Total	693	100

29. It is difficult for me to get interested in the material which is not related to my context (culture. everyday life).

	Frequency	Percentage
I disagree	362	52.2
I am not sure	118	17.0
I agree	213	30.7
Total	693	100

30. Speaking activities and pair/group work results in much noise, which makes it difficult for me to learn a language.

	Frequency	Percentage
I disagree	431	62.2
I am not sure	98	14.1
I agree	164	23.7
Total	693	100

APPENDIX 8.3: THE EFFECT OF 'SCHOOL TYPE' ON LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLT

Questionnaire Section 1

Questionnaire items: thematic groups 1–6		Mean	SD	Sig.
1. Language and Learning Theory	Public Central	3.53[8]	.667	
	Public Peripheral	3.54	.647	
	Private Central	4.00	.840	.009
	Private Peripheral	3.98	.751	.000
	Total	3.60	.696	
2. Error Correction	Public Central	3.57	1.180	
	Public Peripheral	3.62	1.234	
	Private Central	3.98	1.097	
	Private Peripheral	3.85	1.228	
	Total	3.64	1.205	
3. Classroom Interaction	Public Central	2.75	1.138	
	Public Peripheral	2.89	1.123	
	Private Central	2.92	1.080	
	Private Peripheral	2.84	1.118	
	Total	2.82	1.127	
4. Learner and Teacher Roles	Public Central	3.79	1.039	
	Public Peripheral	3.94	1.058	
	Private Central	4.10	.887	
	Private Peripheral	4.06	.992	
	Total	3.89	1.037	
5. Syllabus and Course Design	Public Central	2.91	1.033	
	Public Peripheral	2.98	1.004	
	Private Central	2.98	1.051	
	Private Peripheral	3.05	1.204	
	Total	2.96	1.039	
6. Teaching Materials and Activities	Public Central	4.01	1.264	
	Public Peripheral	3.86	1.362	
	Private Central	4.28	1.086	
	Private Peripheral	4.14	1.285	
	Total	3.98	1.300	

[8]As a result of post hoc analysis, statistically significant differences were detected between the public and private school learners' attitudes towards CLT conceptions; the significance level is indicated in the right-hand column

Questionnaire Section 2

Composite mean scores of learners' attitudes towards CLT and non-CLT activities across various school types

Questionnaire items: thematic group 7		Mean	SD	Sig.
CLT activities[9]	public central	4.09	.622	.005
	Public Peripheral	4.27	.567	.000
	private central	4.32	.625	.000
	private peripheral	3.60	1.072	
	Total	4.13	.682	
Non-CLT activities[10]	public central	3.30	.715	.001
	Public Peripheral	3.34	.659	.000
	Private Central	2.84	.676	
	Private Peripheral	2.55	.839	
	Total	3.22	.743	

Questionnaire Section 3

Learners' assessments of CLT-related challenges across different school types

Questionnaire items: thematic group 8		Mean	SD	Sig.
26.[11] It is difficult for me to study in a foreign language	Public Central	2.69	1.979	.027
	Public Peripheral	3.16	1.997	
	Private Central	2.20	1.856	.023
	Private Peripheral	1.80	1.612	.000
	Total	2.77	1.988	
27. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in a foreign language with a Georgian classmate	Public Central	2.17	1.824	
	Public Peripheral	2.19	1.834	
	Private Central	2.00	1.754	
	Private Peripheral	2.23	1.861	
	Total	2.18	1.824	
28. Having many students in the group makes it difficult to learn a foreign language	Public Central	3.34	1.974	
	Public Peripheral	3.45	1.953	
	Private Central	3.20	2.015	
	Private Peripheral	3.52	1.945	
	Total	3.39	1.962	
29. It is difficult for me to get interested in the material which is not related to my context (culture, everyday life)	Public Central	2.95	2.003	
	Public Peripheral	2.96	2.003	
	Private Central	2.60	1.985	
	Private Peripheral	2.78	2.004	
	Total	2.92	2.000	
30.[12] Speaking activities and pair/group work results in much noise, which makes it difficult for me to learn a language	Public Central	2.46	1.928	.001
	Public Peripheral	2.71	1.983	
	Private Central	1.50	1.340	.000
	Private Peripheral	2.54	1.961	
	Total	2.51	1.941	

[9] As a result of a post hoc analysis, a significant difference was revealed between Private Peripheral school and all other school type learners' attitudes towards CLT activities. The significance level is indicated in the right column.

[10] Private school learners were found to be significantly less in favor of non-CLT activities than public school learners; the significance level is indicated in the right column.

[11] A statistically significant difference was revealed between Public Peripheral and all other school types: public, central: *p.*=.027; Private Central: *p.*=.023; Private Peripheral: *p.*=.000.

[12] A statistically significant difference was revealed between Public Peripheral and Public Central (*p.*=.001) and Private Central (*p.*=.000) school types. With no other items was any statistically significant difference detected.

APPENDIX 9.1: OBSERVATION FORM USED IN THE STUDY

School: …		**Grade**: …	**Course book used**: …
Date: …	**Level**: …	**Length of lesson**: …	**Number of students**: …
Lesson focus: …		**Method used:** …	

Classroom Behavior	**Yes**	**No**	**Partly**
1. Language and learning theory			
1. There is more focus on meaning than form of the language			
2. Natural situation for meaningful language use is provided			
3. Language functions are dealt with			
4. Discourse and strategic competencies are dealt with			
5. Target language is spoken in the lesson			
6. There is more fluency than accuracy work done in the lesson			
7. An inductive rather than deductive approach is used while explaining language concepts			

2. Course design and syllabus			
8. The course is primarily aimed at teaching lear			
9. Besides the course book, other teaching resources, more adapted to learners' needs and interests, are [illegible]			
10. The lesson is aimed at preparing learners for real life communication			
3. Teacher and learner roles			
11. The teacher is a facilitator, monitor, a guide, feedback provider, needs analyst, co-communicator			
12. The teacher provides a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere in the class			
13. The teacher is friendly and encouraging			
14. The teacher is reactive to students' spontaneous needs			
15. The learner is independent in the study process			
4. Classroom interaction			
16. There is more student-student than teacher-student interaction			
17. There is more student talking time (STT) than teacher talking time (TTT)			
18. There is pair/group work conducted in the lesson			
19. The individual attention is paid to learners' needs and interests			
20. Teaching process is student-centered			

5. Error correction			
21. Error correction is provided in the form of a delayed feedback during free speaking activities			
22. The learners are encouraged to peer-correct			
23. The learners are encouraged to self-correct			
6. Teaching materials and activities			
24. Some authentic materials are used			
25. Material seems to be interesting and matching to the learners' needs			
26. Many CLT activities are conducted in the lesson, such as discussions, debates, role plays, presentations			
27. The activities have truly communicative character			
7. Challenges			
28. Teachers are not proficient in the target foreign language			
29. Teachers do not seem to be aware of CLT principles			
30. Teachers do not seem to be trained in using CLT			
31. There is the influence of traditional way of teaching felt in the class			
32. Students do not seem willing to speak out and be active in the lesson			
33. Students seem uncomfortable speaking in a foreign language with each other			
34. Learners of various level of language proficiency seem to be causing difficulties			
35. Learners are having difficulties learning in the foreign language			
36. Large group of students seem to be complicating the study process			
37. There are classroom management problems (noise, chaos, not enough space) related to CLT practices			

APPENDIX 9.2: CLT PRINCIPLES OBSERVED IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS IN TBILISI

1. There is more focus on meaning than form of the language

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	3	11.5
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

2. Natural situation for meaningful language use is provided

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	4	15.4
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

3. Language functions are dealt with

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	22	84.6
Partly True	2	7.7
True	2	7.7
Total	26	100

4. Discourse and strategic competences are dealt with

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	22	84.6
Partly True	2	7.7
True	2	7.7
Total	26	100

5. The target language is spoken in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	4	15.4
Partly True	10	38.5
True	12	46.2
Total	26	100

6. There is more fluency than accuracy work done in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	15	57.7
Partly True	6	23.1
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

7. Attention is paid to learners' individual needs and interests

	Frequency	Perrcentage
Not True	17	65.4
Partly True	4	15.4
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

8. An inductive rather than deductive approach is used while explaining language concepts

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	5	19.2
True	3	11.5
Total	26	1

9. Besides the coursebook, other teaching resources, more adapted to learners' needs and interests, are also used in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	7	26.9
True	1	3.8
Total	26	100

10. There is enough skills work provided in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	17	65.4
Partly True	5	19.2
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

11. The lesson is aimed at preparing learners for real life communication

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	6	23.1
True	2	7.7
Total	26	100

12. The teacher is friendly and encouraging

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	3	11.5
Partly True	10	38.5
True	13	50.0
Total	26	100

13. The teaching process is student-centered

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	16	61.5
Partly True	6	23.1
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

14. The teacher is a facilitator and guide in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	13	50.0
Partly True	7	26.9
True	6	23.1
Total	26	100

15. The teacher is reactive to students' spontaneous needs

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	16	61.5
Partly True	5	19.2
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

16. There is more student-student interaction than teacher-student interaction

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	4	15.4
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

17. There is more students talking time (STT) than teacher talking time (TTT)

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	20	76.9
Partly True	3	11.5
True	3	11.5
Total	26	100

18. There is pair/group work conducted in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	19	73.1
Partly True	2	7.7
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

19. There is a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	8	30.8
Partly True	9	34.6
True	9	34.6
Total	26	100

20. Error correction is provided in the form of a delayed feedback during free speaking activities

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	4	15.4
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

21. Learners are encouraged to peercorrect

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	15	57.7
Partly True	6	23.1
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

22. Learners are encouraged to selfcorrect

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	15	57.7
Partly True	5	19.2
True	6	23.1
Total	26	100

23. Some authentic materials are used in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	18	69.2
Partly True	3	11.5
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

24. Materials seem to be interesting and matching learners' abilities and needs

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	12	46.2
Partly True	9	34.6
True	5	19.2
Total	26	100

25. Many CLT activities are conducted in the lesson, such as discussions, debates, role plays, presentations

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	15	57.7
Partly True	8	30.8
True	3	11.5
Total	26	100

26. Activities have a truly communicative character

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	17	65.4
Partly True	6	23.1
True	3	11.5
Total	26	100

27. Teachers are not proficient in the target foreign language

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	10	38.5
Partly True	7	26.9
True	9	34.6
Total	26	100

28. Teachers do not seem to be aware of CLT principles

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	6	23.1
Partly True	6	23.1
True	14	53.8
Total	26	100

29. Teachers do not seem to be trained in using CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	12	46.2
Partly True	6	23.1
True	8	30.8
Total	26	100

30. There is an influence of the old- fashioned way of teaching

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	5	19.2
Partly True	7	26.9
True	14	53.8
Total	26	100

31. Students do not seem willing to speak out and be active in the lesson

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	25	96.2
Partly True	1	3.8
Total	26	100

32. Students seem uncomfortable speaking in a foreign language

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	22	84.6
Partly True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

33. Learners of various levels of language proficiency seem to be causing difficulties

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	16	61.5
Partly True	10	38.5
Total	26	100

34. Learners are having difficulties learning in a foreign language

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	14	53.8
Partly True	10	38.5
True	2	7.7
Total	26	100

35. Large groups of students seem to be complicating the learning process

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	9	34.6
Partly True	10	38.5
True	7	26.9
Total	26	100

36. There are classroom management problems (noise, chaos, not enough space) related to CLT practices

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	9	34.6
Partly True	13	50.0
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

37. There are not enough facilities to support CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	7	26.9
Partly True	4	15.4
True	15	57.7
Total	26	100

38. The classroom is arranged in such a way that it does not support CLT

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	7	26.9
Partly True	15	57.7
True	4	15.4
Total	26	100

39. The pre-determined and imposed language curriculum seems to be impeding CLT application

	Frequency	Percentage
Not True	5	19.2
Partly True	5	19.2
True	16	61.5
Total	26	100

PPENDIX 9.3: INTER-ITEM CORRELATION ANALYSIS: OBSERVATION THEMATIC GROUPS 1–7

			1. Language and Learning Theory	2. Course Design and Syllabus	3. Teacher's and Learner's Roles	4. Classroom Interaction	5. Error Correction	6. Teaching Materials and Activities	7. CLT-related Challenges
1. Language and learning theory	Pearson Correlation	.846**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000							
2. Course design and syllabus	Pearson Correlation	.637**	.775**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000						
3. Teachers' and learners' roles	Pearson Correlation	.832**	.895**	.796**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000					
4. Classroom interaction	Pearson Correlation	.777**	.918**	.807**	.895**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000				
5. Error correction	Pearson Correlation	.787**	.800**	.552**	.812**	.803**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000			
6. Teaching materials and activities	Pearson Correlation	.844**	.924**	.693**	.839**	.850**	.783**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
7.CLT-related challenges	Pearson Correlation	-.793**	-.933**	-.814**	-.839**	-.869**	-.673**	.900**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

APPENDIX 9.4: THE EFFECTS OF CERTAIN TEACHER-RELATED FACTORS ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

9.4A: Teachers' classroom performance across different school types:

Observation item thematic groups	Four school types	Mean	Sig.
1. Language and learning theory[1]	Public Central	1.47	006
	Public Peripheral	1.44	.003
	Private Central	3.80	
	Private Peripheral	2.56	
	Total	2.08	
2. Course design and syllabus	Public Central	1.37	.000
	Public Peripheral	1.25	.000
	Private Central	3.53	
	Private Peripheral	1.83	
	Total	1.82	
3. Teacher's and learner's roles	Public Central	1.94	.000
	Public Peripheral	1.94	.000
	Private Central	4.70	
	Private Peripheral	2.88	
	Total	2.62	
4. Classroom interaction	Public Central	1.44	.005
	Public Peripheral	1.44	.006
	Private Central	4.30	
	Private Peripheral	2.50	
	Total	2.15	
5. Error correction	Public Central	1.96	
	Public Peripheral	1.33	
	Private Central	3.67	
	Private Peripheral	2.33	
	Total	2.15	
6. Teaching materials and activities	Public Central	1.50	.000
	Public Peripheral	1.56	.000
	Private Central	3.90	
	Private Peripheral	2.38	
	Total	2.12	

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1-5 (1=not communicative at all; 5=highly communicative).
Note: The highest scores among the groups are underlined.

[1] A statistically significant difference was detected between Private Central and both public school types in Thematic groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. There was no statistical difference revealed in Thematic Group 5. The significance levels are indicated in the right-hand column in the table, next to the mean score.

9.4B: Effect of teachers' age on their classroom performance

Thematic groups:	Age group	Mean
1. Language and learning theory[2]	Between 25-35	<u>3.63</u>
	Between 35-45	2.58
	Between 45-55	1.60
	Between 55-65	1.42
	Total	2.08
2.[3] **Course design and syllabus**	Between 25-35	<u>3.33</u>
	Between 35-45	2.19
	Between 45-55	1.33
	Between 55-65	1.67
	Total	1.82
3. Teachers' and learners' roles[4]	Between 25-35	<u>5.00</u>
	Between 35-45	3.11
	Between 45-55	1.96
	Between 55-65	2.17
	Total	2.62
4. Classroom interaction	Between 25-35	<u>4.50</u>
	Between 35-45	2.50
	Between 45-55	1.67
	Between 55-65	1.50
	Total	2.15
5. Error correction	Between 25-35	<u>4.33</u>
	Between 35-45	2.56
	Between 45-55	1.67
	Between 55-65	1.44
	Total	2.15
6. Teaching materials and activities	Between 25-35	<u>4.00</u>
	Between 35-45	2.56
	Between 45-55	1.67
	Between 55-65	1.33
	Total	2.12

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1-5 (1=not communicative at all; 5=highly communicative).
Note: The highest scores among the groups are underlined.

[2] For Thematic Groups 1, 3, 5 and 6, statistically significant difference was detected between the age group '25-35', on the one hand, and age groups '44-45' and '55-65', on the other (*p.*=.000 for all groups); also, between the age group '35-34' and '55-65' (*p.*=0.33 (1), *p.*=0.27 (3), *p.*=043 (5); *p.*=.023 (6).

[3] No statistically significant difference was detected among the groups 2 and 4.

9.5C: Effect of teaching experience on the teachers' classroom performance

Thematic groups	Teaching experience	Mean	Sig.
1. Language and[5] learning theory	over 5 years	<u>2.88</u>	
	over 10 years	1.61	.037
	over 20 years	1.38	.011
	Total	2.08	
2. Course design and syllabus[6]	over 5 years	<u>2.67</u>	
	over 10 years	1.24	.015
	over 20 years	1.67	
	Total	1.82	
3. Teachers' and learners' roles	over 5 years	<u>3.55</u>	
	over 10 years	2.11	.049
	over 20 years	1.50	.005
	Total	2.62	
4. Classroom interaction	over 5 years	<u>3.05</u>	
	over 10 years	1.61	
	over 20 years	1.50	.039
	Total	2.15	
5. Error correction	over 5 years	<u>2.87</u>	
	over 10 years	1.81	
	over 20 years	1.00	.004
	Total	2.15	
6. Teaching materials and activities	over 5 years	<u>2.85</u>	
	over 10 years	1.71	
	over 20 years	1.25	.030
	Total	2.12	

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1-5 (1=not communicative at all; 5=highly communicative).
Note: The highest scores among the groups are underlined.

[5] In Thematic Groups 1 and 3, statistically significant differences were detected between the group of teachers with 'over 5 years', on the one hand, and 'over ten years' and 'over twenty year' of teaching experiemce groups, on the other. The significance levels are indicated in the right-hand column in the table, next to the mean scores.

[6] For Thematic Groups 2, 4, 5, 6, statistically significant differences were detected between the group of teachers with 'over 5 years' and 'over twenty year' of teaching experience. The significance levels are indicated in the rigt-hand column of the table.

9.4D: Effect of teachers' understanding level of theoretical underpinning of CLT on their classroom performance

Observation item thematic groups:	Understanding level of CLT theory	Mean	Sig.
1. Language and learning theory[7]	Have no understanding	1.30	
	Have partial understanding	2.36	
	Have full understanding	3.85	.011
	Total	2.08	
2. Course design and syllabus	Have no understanding	1.19	
	Have partial understanding	2.43	
	Have full understanding	2.73	
	Total	1.82	
3. Teachers' and learners' roles	Have no understanding	1.68	
	Have partial understanding	3.14	
	Have full understanding	4.50	.002
	Total	2.62	
4. Classroom interaction[8]	Have no understanding	1.36	
	Have partial understanding	2.43	
	Have full understanding	4.00	.024
	Total	2.15	
5. Error correction[9]	Have no understanding	1.43	
	Have partial understanding	2.14	.028
	Have full understanding	4.20	.008
	Total	2.15	
6. Teaching materials and activities	Have no understanding	1.32	
	Have partial understanding	2.29	.012
	Have full understanding	4.10	.001
	Total	2.12	

Note: The mean scores are presented on a scale of 1–5(1=not communicative at all; 5=highly communicative).

[7] In Thematic groups 1, 2, and 3, statistically significant differences were detected between the group of teachers with 'full understanding' and 'no understanding' of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT. The significance levels are indicated in the right-hand column in the table, next to the mean scores.

[8] No statistically significant differences were revealed in Thematic Group 4.

[9] In Thematic groups 5 and 6, statistically significant differences were detected between the group of teachers with 'full understanding' of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, on the one hand, and 'partial understanding' and 'no understanding', on the other. The significance levels are indicated in the right-hand column in the table, next to the mean scores.

APPENDIX 9.5: 'SCHOOL TYPE' EFFECT ON THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY FACED BY THE TEACHERS

	School	Mean	Sig.
Public Central	Public Peripheral	3.47	1.000
	Private Central	1.29	.000
	Private Peripheral	2.50	.025
Public Peripheral	Public Central	3.42	1.000
	Private Central	1.29	.000
	Private Peripheral	2.50	.020
Private Central	Public Central	3.42	.000
	Public Peripheral	3.47	.000
	Private Peripheral	2.50	.007
Private Peripheral	Public Central	3.43	.025
	Public Peripheral	3.47	.020
	Private Central	3.42	.007

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

APPENDIX 10.1: CEF DESCRIPTORS – QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE USE

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn-taking, referencing, allusion making etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.	an initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he / she needs to, though he /she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and, "but" and "because".
A1	A very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

	PRONUNCIATION[1]
C2	- Has **a totally natural**, native-like speech, with no accent. - **Absolutely no interference** of pronunciation with meaning comprehension.
C1	- Has a **natural speech**, with only **a slight accent** noticeable sometimes. - **No obvious interference** of pronunciation with meaning comprehension.
B2	- Has **a relatively natural** speech with **noticeable Georgian accent**. - **Almost no interference** of pronunciation with meaning comprehension.
B1	- Maintains **an acceptable degree of naturalness** of the speech, with a **considerable Georgian accent** - **Occasional interference** of pronunciation with comprehensibility.
A2	- **Very low degree of naturalness** of the speech, with a **heavy Georgian accent** - **Frequent interference** of pronunciation with comprehensibility of the speech.
A1	- **Almost no naturalness** observed in the speech, with a **very heavy Georgian accent**. - **Constant interference** of pronunciation with comprehensibility of the speech.
A0	- Pronunciation problems make the speech **almost incomprehensible**.

[1] As pronunciation is not included in CEF spoken language descriptors, a separate scheme was evaluated for this aspect of the spoken language in consultation with the experts and specialists.

APPENDIX 10.2: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EVALUATION FORM

School Name: … **Expected level/Course book:…**

Please evaluate students' spoken language proficiency, on the scale 0-6, according to the language proficiency level descriptors presented below

Student Name	Fluency	Accuracy	Coherence / cohesion	Grammatical Range	Lexical Range	Pronunciation	Interaction	Overall level
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								

Overall impression/comments: …

APPENDIX 10.3: LEARNERS' COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY ASSSSESSMENT[1]

Language aspects	School types	Mean	SD
Fluency	Public Central	1.17	.633
	Public Peripheral	1.18	.624
	Private Central	2.52	.378
	Private Peripheral	2.00	.418
Accuracy	Public Central	1.17	.591
	Public Peripheral	1.15	.570
	Private Central	2.45	.350
	Private Peripheral	1.73	.518
Coherence/Cohesion	Public Central	1.11	.669
	Public Peripheral	1.13	.565
	Private Central	2.39	.282
	Private Peripheral	1.93	.420
Grammatical range	Public Central	1.09	.587
	Public Peripheral	1.14	.516
	Private Central	2.55	.472
	Private Peripheral	1.82	.549
Lexical range	Public Central	1.23	.665
	Public Peripheral	1.44	.543
	Private Central	2.70	.430
	Private Peripheral	2.16	.594
Pronunciation	Public Central	1.27	.652
	Public Peripheral	1.55	.491
	Private Central	2.84	.516
	Private Peripheral	2.11	.563
Interaction	Public Central	1.21	.660
	Public Peripheral	1.35	.462
	Private Central	2.70	.498
	Private Peripheral	2.05	.292
Overall language proficiency	Public Central	1.18	.641
	Public Peripheral	1.30	.571
	Private Central	2.82	.513
	Private Peripheral	2.09	.478

[1] A statistically significant difference was detected between Private and Public school types across most of the spoken language aspects. In 'fluency' and 'Coherence/Cohesion' areas statistically significant difference was also detected between Private Central and Private Peripheral schools.

APPENDIX 10.4: CORRECLATION OF THE LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE

		Fluency	Accuracy	Coherence	Grammar	Lexis	Pronun.	Interaction
Fluency	Sig.	1						
Accuracy	Sig.	.953** .000	1					
Coherence/ Cohesion	Sig.	.952** .000	.946** .000	1				
Grammatical range	Sig.	.926** .000	.957** .000	.919** .000	1			
Lexical range	Sig.	.928** .000	.930** .000	.938** .000	.936** .000	1		
Pronunciation	Sig.	.919** .000	.929** .000	.918** .000	.944** .000	.946** .000	1	
Interaction	Sig.	.937** .000	.903** .000	.925** .000	.897** .000	.926** .000	.927** .000	1
	N	65	65	65	65	65	65	65

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX 10.5: LEARNER SPEECH SAMPLES[2]: Levels A0–B2

Estimated language proficiency level: <u>A0–Almost no competence</u>
Task 1: Picture description

R[3]: What can you see in the picture?
L: Family…as…uh….dad…uh…as children…… mum is… "*shvilebi rogor aris inglisurad?* - how is 'children' in English?*"*(prompt), yes, children… (communication breakdown).
R: What do you see in the background? Nature?
L: Mmm…(prompt) – mountain…beautiful…yes…(communication breakdown).

Task 2: Role Play[4]
- What's your name?
- *I'm…
- What's your name?
- *I am fine…Nika
- (Prompt)"*Ara, ra ggvia*? – No, what's your name*?"*
- ...*Ana
- Do you like Italia?
- *Yes.
- What you see?
- *Italy /italia/ and Rome /romi/ (with Georgian pronunciation).....
- "*mkitxe rame* – ask me something!".

(Communication Breakdown)

Estimated language proficiency level: <u>A1–Limited competence</u>

Task 1: Picture Description

L: Uh, these people are…uh…uh…on holiday…they are on seaside…uh…uh……weather is sunny……uh……(communication breakdown)
R: Can you tell me about the family?
L: uh…This is father, mother, daughter and son… I think that this boy can't swim, so he has got this …uh…… (communication breakdown).
R: What about the nature?
L: … Nature?...uh...uh……uh.here are some hotels, I think…uh…this is castle, maybe…uh……some mountains there……(communication breakdown).
R: Well, what about the beach?

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[2] Speech sample notes: 1. '…' indicates a pause. 2. '……' indicates a very long pause. 3. 'uh' indicates mumbling. 4. Speech bounded by a pair of asterisks (* - *) indicates self-correction. 5. A carat (^) indicates an incomplete word. 6. Words produced in Georgian are *italicized* and bound with inverted commas ("–") which also includes the English translation of the Georgian word presented. 7. Incomprehensible words are marked as "?". 8. Wrong pronunciation is italicized and phonetic sound are indicated with /-/ next to the word. 8. Additional, meta-linguistic information (e.g. laughing, prompts from the co-speaker or the researcher) about speakers' speech is provided in brackets (-). 9. The fillers produced in Georgian during the speech are italicized and a GF (Georgian Filler) note is put next to it.

[3] R=researcher; L=Learner.

[4] The speakers under evaluation in this and all subsequent role plays presented in this Appendix will be marked with an asterisk*.

L: Beach is…uh…"*Qvishiani* – sandy" (prompt), of yes, the sandy beach; I think people like sandy beach because the stones don't…uh…"*erchoba* - prickle"…uh……uh……(communication breakdown).
R: Ok, what else? How do you think they are spending their holidays?
L: Uh…uh…in the morning they go to the beach, swim…uh……uh……they play something…uh…… (communication breakdown)

Task 2: Role Play

- Hello, what is your name?
- *My name is Nutsa and…how…
- And my name is Dimitry. How old are you?
- *I am fine… /auhaiu/ (laughs)
- How old are you? (repeats)
- *Ah, how old are you? I am thirteen years old.
- Where do you live?
- *I live in Tbilisi, and I was…I was in England.
- I was in Spain…..uh…how did you spend your …holiday time?
- *……"*Rogor? Gamimeore* –What did you say? Can you repeat?"
- How did you spend your holiday time?
- *Holiday time? Uh……
- (prompts) "*Rogor gaatara ardadegebi?* – how did you spend your holidays?"
- *I…uh…I was in England and I…I was in England with my friend.
- I was in Spain and I visit a lot of good places – like a parks and museums, and …uh…good places.
- *…uh……good places…uh…(communication breakdown)

Estimated language proficiency level: <u>A2–Basic competence</u>

Task 1: Picture description

Learner: Here is a little family: there are mother, father, sister and brother. They're in beach, they have fun day, I think. There are some guys in the…uh…I forgot it…in beautiful *boat*/bouθ/… Here are some beautiful houses, and here are *some – many* people, I can say; and they are swimming in water, playing in water, it's…and… uh…then …uh…they… are doing…..doing some things…uh…we do this…uh… with the ground of beach; and they have fun here, I can say. They are together, and…uh… oh, yes…they are playing with this….this is some… *One hun…- this game*, you need to …uh…*'ro^ – throw* this …uh…..'*isa* (GF)'…what is this grey thing…(prompt)… ring, yes, throw and get to it, so, it's …uh…I know this game; It's too good to be in the beach, to play, *fa^ - run* and so…uh… it's very good, I think. There are some houses, and, oh yes, its' like castle, but I don't think so, it's big house; there can be rich men, who have many…uh…many…uh…many money, yes, so it's beautiful. So, it's the holiday of the family,…uh… one family.

Task 2: Role Play

- *How are you and what's your name?
- My name is Mariam and your?
- *My name is Nika. Where did you spend your holidays?
- Uh…In Paris.
- *Uh…it's fine.
- Uh…and you?
- *Uh…I was in Mexico.

- …Wow! Excellent!
- *Yes, it very nice and…exciting.
- Uh…how did you spend …uh… your time?
- *It was very good…uh…me and *our friend – my friends* were together, and we were…uh…laughing…and playing.
- Uh…….uh…were your parents with you?
- *No, my parents were in Tbilisi…in Georgia…and I want to see them… very fast. And yours?
- Uh…yes, my parents were… with me, and my sisters too.
- *Oh, it's great. Uh… ok, nice to meet you.
- …*Nice. Good-bye!*

Estimated language proficiency level: <u>B1–Sufficient Competence</u>

Task 1: Picture Description

Learner: This family went to Greece...in…island, it's summer, it's already August, and they're having fun, and there's whole family: mother, father and children; *their- they're* uh…they are having much fun…they are on a beach and one hour ago they came here. There is also pool and they will like it, but their mother and father told them that sea is better for them, like for everyone, but it's not available to swim too far, because there are sharks and everything… They are having fun together because they are brother and sisters. They are making some…some things with sand and everything…they …they don't know how to swim yet, and, and also, they don't know how to have fun on the beach, because they are too little, and their mother and father are teaching them about everything, *they taught them that…they taught them how* to play volleyball and also football on the beach ... and they really want to *tease - teach* them how to swim.

Task 2: Role Play

- *How are you?
- Fine, and you?
- *Yes, fine. Where are you from?
- I am from Georgia and you?
- *Me, too. And where do you live?
- I live in Abashidze Street.
- *And I am on Petriashvili Street. Nice to meet you!
- Me too. Where were you on a holiday?
- *I was in New York, in USA, and how about you?>
- I was in Germany.
- *That's great! In what…in what …uh…city?
- I was in Baxba.
- *That's great, and now you're going back to Georgia, right?
- Yes, you too, yes?
- *Ja, of course, this train goes back to Georgia.
- Did you like…uh
- *New York? Oh, ja, of course! I went there with my family, we had fun; we went to amusement parks, and also the best part was shopping. Uh, we like shopping. And you?
- Yes, I was with my friends and I liked it very much, because we went on a shopping too, and also, we went to school for one month.
- *And are your friends here?
- Uh…no, they *went – they're …uh…going* to Georgia next week...by plane.

- *By plane? I also wanted to go by plane, but my mum told me that it's better to travel with a train.
- Yes, I agree with her
- *Well, I don't, I like plane better.
- Uh…what…you said you were shopping there. What did you bought there?
- *I bought *a – many* things like, clothes, T-shirt, pants, everything. And you?
- Uh…I bought some gift for my friends, too.
- *That's great. How…and…your friends, they're going in one week, right?
- Yes.
- *That's too bad, I wanted to meet them.
- Hmm, we can meet each other next week.
- *Yes, of course we can! Can you …uh…tell me your number? Phone number?
- Yes, 595 472147.
- *I'll call you then. Do you want to know my number?
- Ok
- *557 207 207. I think that I have the greatest number in Georgia. Well, they told me they call this number is called a golden number?
- That's cool!
- * Do you have a boyfriend?
- No, and you girlfriend?
- *No.
- Bad.
- *Well, I had it at least one month ago.
- And you broke up?
- *Yes.
- Ok, I think the train…uh…went to Georgia now. Bye
- *Ok. Bye.

Estimated language proficiency level: B2–Good competence

Task 1: Picture description

- So, I can see a happy family in this picture. There are two children, *a man and a…a husband and a* wife; their marriage is very happy, the children are very happy too. The boy is wearing a green sunglasses…uh…and *there is – and around* the boy there is something like the sun, *which helps him not to – which helps him to* swim in the sea. In the background, I can definitely say that there is a mountain…*there is not much… the sky is not really* cloudy and I can see people playing volleyball and…and they are trying to ride the boat in the sea, I think. It is funny weather and everybody's faces are happy, and also in the back I can see umbrellas, which are protecting the people from the sun. Yes...uh…I can also see sand and a very big house in the mountains, yes…uh…what else can I say… I think, uh, in the…in the sand there is a big blue building, I think it's a café, because usually in the places like this, there always is a café. Uh…*the – a* husband and a boy are holding things, like…circular things – a husband is holding a red thing and the boy green….uh…*they – I think they* have not swum yet, but they have certainly *build – built* the castles from the sand, because there you can see in this picture something which helps the boy and the girl to help the castles from the sand, I think. I also can say, that the half of the beach is empty, which I don't definitely know why, people who are still on the beach are very happy because they all are having fun, and on the boat I can see two boys or guys; one is sitting and having rest and the other is definitely not having fun, because he's…the boat and it's really hard for him. Yes, so it's a really happy family, everything's nice in this picture, yes, everything's fine.

Task 2: Role Play[5]

- *Hi, you are going to Georgia, yes?
- Well, yes, it's…it has been a very, very long day and… but I think it'll be good to see my country again.
- * Well, my name is David, and yours?
- Well, my George, George, well I haven't seen you…
- *I haven't seen you too, but…
- No, no I remember you in New York;
- *No, it seems it wasn't me. And from which country are you coming to Georgia? I am coming from Switzerland.
- Oh, was in England
- * Oh, you were in England, I was in England too. You know, England, then Switzerland and then Georgia. It was a really nice holiday. I really had some fun, and you?
- Yes, it was pretty fun for me too. I was there with my mother, and I can say that it was very, very, very… stressful for me.
- *Yes, it was stressful. I was with my family, so it was harder, but right now I am coming back to Georgia and my school is starting, and that's really bad for me because I …well, that's not bad but that's really hard for me; and what…what would you say about the school? Do you like it or not?
- My personal thoughts, well, I think school is very *nice* /nis/.
- *Oh, yes, school is nice, but it's very hard, yes. What sports to you play?
- Football, basketball, but I most… karate.
- *Karate? So, you're the future Bruce Lee, yes?!
- So, I was interesting in…in your life…so, when I look at you… I think that you…have been… taking some art classes.
- *Yes, I have been taking some art classes, and whole my life I've dedicated to learn to unlock the Da Vinci Code
- Oh, you are one funny man.
- *Oh, thank you. So, the train has just stopped. It was really nice to meet you. Bye!
- Bye!

[5] The speaker under evaluation is marked with an asterisk*.

SAMENVATTING

De geschiedenis van de methoden in het taalonderwijs kent vele dramatische wendingen, en de zoektocht naar de beste methode duurt nog steeds voort. Deze zoektocht is door sommigen vergeleken met die naar de Heilige Graal, waarin vakmensen zich op langdurige expedities begaven om de Graal te vinden, uiteindelijk met weinig succes (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 164). Volgens de huidige normen is de beste methode echter die welke het meest in de behoeften van een bepaalde samenleving voorziet. Vandaag de dag is, tegen de achtergrond van een groeiende globalisering, grensoverschrijdende communicatie een prioriteit geworden, en daarmee het leren van andere talen. De opstelling door de Raad van Europa in 2001 van het Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR), een document waarin richtlijnen zijn neergelegd voor nieuwe doelstellingen omtrent kennis van vreemde talen en dat gericht is op het vergroten van de praktische beheersing van een vreemde taal door leerlingen in die taal, is het bewijs van een paradigmaverschuiving die een nieuw tijdperk heeft gemarkeerd in het onderwijs van vreemde talen, zowel in Europa, waaronder ook Georgië, als in andere delen van de wereld.

Het in dit proefschrift gepresenteerde onderzoek werd uitgevoerd om empirische gegevens te verzamelen met betrekking tot de huidige situatie van het onderwijs in de Engelse taal (English Language Teaching, ELT) in scholen voor voortgezet onderwijs in Tbilisi, de hoofdstad van Georgië. Het hoofddoel van deze studie is het onderzoek naar hoe de theorie de praktijk ontmoet en wat het resultaat is van het combineren van theorie en praktijk. In het algemeen doorloopt onderwijsbeleid verscheidene stadia alvorens het zijn uiteindelijke doel bereikt. In de eerste plaats moet de theorie op adequate wijze begrepen en in brede kring geaccepteerd worden door zowel de eigenlijke uitvoerders van het beleid, de leraren, alsook de andere onmiddellijk betrokkenen bij het leerproces, de leerlingen. In de tweede plaats moet het beleid ook daadwerkelijk in de praktijk worden toegepast, en moet het dus kenmerken hebben die verenigbaar zijn met de werkelijkheid van het klaslokaal. In de derde plaats moet het succes van een bepaald onderwijsbeleid uiteindelijk worden bepaald aan de hand van meting van de effecten ervan op de kennis van de leerling. In het hier gepresenteerde onderzoek is getracht om, met medeneming van deze aspecten, te komen tot een totaalbeeld van de algehele situatie op het gebied van het Engelse taalvaardigheidsonderwijs in Georgië.

Dit proefschrift, getiteld Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia – From Theory to Practice, bestaat uit elf hoofdstukken. Hoofdstuk 1 omvat de Inleiding. In hoofdstuk 2 tot en met 6 wordt de theoretische achtergrond van de onderzochte taalonderwijsmethode, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), beschreven. In hoofdstuk 7 tot en met 10 wordt

ingegaan op de verschillende deelterreinen van de onderzochte methode zoals die wordt toegepast op een aantal geselecteerde scholen in Tbilisi; nagegaan wordt welk begrip de taaldocenten en leerlingen hebben van CLT en hoe ontvankelijk zij ervoor zijn (hoofdstuk 7 en 8), welke de actuele realiteit is van de taalklaslokalen (hoofdstuk 9), en in welke mate de som van al deze factoren weerspiegeld wordt in het niveau van communicatieve vaardigheid van de leerlingen in het Engels (hoofdstuk 10). Hoofdstuk 11, het laatste hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift, bevat, naast een samenvatting van de bevindingen en de conclusie van het onderzoek, een aantal aanbevelingen met betrekking tot de huidige situatie van het taalonderwijs in Georgië.

In Hoofdstuk 1, Introduction, worden de doelen van het onderzoek beschreven en de onderzoeksvragen gepresenteerd die gesteld en beantwoord worden in de analytische hoofdstukken van het proefschrift. In dit hoofdstuk worden de algehele opzet van het onderzoek en de gebruikte methoden besproken, en wordt een overzicht van het gehele proefschrift gegeven.

In Hoofdstuk 2, History of Language Teaching Methods, worden de ontwikkelingen op het gebied van het onderwijs in vreemde talen, vanaf het ontstaan van het vak taalonderwijs tot heden ten dage, in het kort beschreven. Het doel van dit hoofdstuk is om CLT, de taalonderwijsmethode die in dit proefschrift onderzocht wordt, in een historische context te plaatsen. Daarbij wordt een overzicht gegeven van de achtergrond en het ontstaan van CLT, om vergelijking en contrastering van CLT met andere taalonderwijsmethoden mogelijk te maken en om de onderscheidende karakteristieken van CLT uiteen te zetten. In dit hoofdstuk wordt ook het concept van het post-methodische tijdperk besproken, alsmede de vraag naar een meer flexibele benadering van onderwijs, gericht op aanpassing aan de wensen en belangstelling van hedendaagse leerlingen, in plaats van een benadering die gefixeerd is op bestaande methodologische kaders.

Hoofdstuk 3, Communicative Language Teaching, is gericht op de beschrijving van de theoretische basis, de kenmerken en de ontwikkeling van CLT. Omdat juist deze methode heden ten dage aanbevolen wordt op zowel openbare als particuliere scholen in Georgië, werd het van belang geacht om er een diepgaand onderzoek naar uit te voeren, waarbij gekeken werd naar het ontstaan van CLT, de theoretische basis, de hoofdprincipes waarop de methode is gebaseerd, en de kritiek en uitdagingen die er veelal mee worden geassocieerd. Dit hoofdstuk dient als achtergrond voor een beter begrip van de in dit proefschrift gebruikte onderzoeksmethoden en -instrumenten (vragenlijsten, interviews, lesobservaties en toetsschema's van de taalvaardigheid van de leerling) bij de bestudering van de geïdentificeerde principes en het kader van CLT.

Hoofdstuk 4, Technology-enhanced Communicative Language Training, behandelt de innovatieve benaderingen die tegenwoordig gebruikt kunnen worden om de efficiëntie van het taalonderwijs te vergroten. Net als

elders vindt er een digitale revolutie binnen het onderwijs plaats, en scholen moeten belangrijke ontwikkelingen in de wereld bijhouden. Dit geldt evenzeer voor het taalonderwijs. De technologie en de mogelijkheden die de ICT biedt aan taalonderwijs en taalstudie zijn sterk in harmonie met de principes van CLT, omdat deze methode zich richt op het uitrusten van taalleerlingen met de communicatieve competenties en vaardigheden die nodig zijn voor het functioneren in allerlei situaties en met behulp van vele wijzen van communicatie, waarvan in de huidige tijd zowel persoonlijk-fysieke als digitale interacties deel uitmaken. In dit hoofdstuk wordt daarom de noodzaak onderstreept om te komen tot een betere integratie van technologie in het taalonderwijs. Van de meest gangbare technologische instrumenten die tegenwoordig populair zijn over de hele wereld wordt het mogelijk gebruik in het taalonderwijs besproken. Een aantal voordelen, maar ook uitdagingen, die verbonden zijn aan de integratie van ICT in het taalonderwijs wordt samengevat, en relevante aanbevelingen omtrent het gebruiksvriendelijker maken van de met ICT versterkte CLT worden bediscussieerd.

Hoofdstuk 5, Foreign Language Teaching in Georgia: From Soviet Times to the Present Day, biedt een historische context van en een perspectief voor het onderwijs in vreemde talen in Georgië. De ontwikkelingen op dit terrein vanaf het Sovjettijdperk tot aan het heden worden in dit hoofdstuk beschreven. Door het onderwijs in vreemde talen in Georgië in de sociaal-historische context van het communistische en post-communistische Oost-Europa te plaatsen, wordt een beter licht geworpen op de wijze waarop sociaal-politieke tendensen tot grote veranderingen hebben geleid in het beleid en de onderwijsmethoden met betrekking tot vreemde talen en hebben bijgedragen aan de hedendaagse toepassingen ervan in Georgië. Sinds de onafhankelijkheid van Georgië van de Sovjetunie in 1991 is, in de veranderende sociaal-politieke context, de noodzaak van een toename van het deel van de bevolking dat vrij kan communiceren in vreemde talen, vooral in het Engels, opnieuw bestudeerd en van een hogere prioriteit voorzien. Terecht is ingezien dat voor een klein land als Georgië, waarvan de nationale taal, het Georgisch, slechts binnen de landsgrenzen gesproken wordt, de beheersing van vreemde talen een middel wordt voor grensoverschrijdende communicatie en een sterkere integratie met de rest van de wereld. In dit hoofdstuk komen tevens de meest recente hervormingen en innovatieve initiatieven op het terrein van het taalonderwijs aan de orde. In hoeverre de inspanningen tot nu toe een weerslag hebben gehad op de algehele positie van het taalonderwijs in Georgië is een onderwerp dat verderop in dit proefschrift (hoofdstuk 7 tot en met 10) ter sprake komt.

In Hoofdstuk 6, Foreign Language Teaching Policy in Georgia, wordt een gedetailleerde beschrijving en analyse gegeven van het huidige beleidsdocument met betrekking tot het onderwijs in vreemde talen in Georgië, het National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (NCFL). Van dit document worden de structuur, de prioriteiten, de doelen en de normen besproken. De

analyse van dit document is belangrijk omdat het NCFL de basis vormt voor de globale onderzoeksvraag in dit proefschrift: in hoeverre bereiken de officiële aanbevelingen het eigenlijke klaslokaal en in hoeverre hebben zij een weerslag op de feitelijke communicatieve vaardigheid van de leerlingen? In de analytische hoofdstukken (hoofdstuk 7 tot en met 10) die op dit hoofdstuk volgen worden de feitelijke taalpraktijk en de communicatieve vaardigheid van de leerlingen onderzocht. Deze analyses zijn erop gericht om te achterhalen in welke mate elk van deze onderwerpen een afspiegeling is van de grondprincipes van de in het NCFL voorgestelde onderwijsmethode, en waar in het traject van de beleidsoverdracht de CLT tegen de grootste hindernissen aanloopt, zo er al sprake is van hindernissen.

Hoofdstuk 7 (Studie 1), English Language Teachers' Perceptions of CLT, is het eerste van vier analytische hoofdstukken in dit proefschrift. Het onderzoek voor deze studie was erop gericht om vast te stellen in welke mate de leraren op de hoogte waren van en zich hielden aan het bestaande taal-curriculum, hoe goed hun inzicht was in de principes van de voorgeschreven onderwijsmethode, en of zij er wel of niet voorstander van waren. De gegevens, verkregen door middel van interviews en vragenlijsten, lieten zien dat de over-grote meerderheid van de taaldocenten in Georgië maar zeer beperkt op de hoogte is van de details van het NCFL en zich – in vergelijkbare mate – weinig houdt aan de aanbevelingen in het taalcurriculum. Dit zou verklaard kunnen worden uit een gebrek aan externe evaluatie, en pogingen daartoe, van de kant van de overheid. Het niveau van inzicht van de taaldocenten in de theoretische grondslagen van CLT bleek ook onvoldoende te zijn. Een reden hiervoor is mogelijk de afwezigheid van een juiste academische achtergrond op het gebied van de methodologie van het taalonderwijs bij de leraren en het incidentele, inconsequente karakter van de trainingen die in Georgië aan leraren in het voortgezet onderwijs worden verstrekt, zowel tijdens hun dienstbetrekking als in de periode die eraan voorafgaat. Voor wat betreft de opvattingen van leraren inzake CLT bleek uit kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve gegevensanalyse dat zij – in theorie – een grote mate van instemming hebben met CLT, welke methode zij als een efficiënt instrument voor het taalonderwijs zien. In Hoofdstuk 7 worden eveneens de evaluaties, door Georgische leraren, van de aan CLT gerelateerde uitdagingen besproken. Het onderzoek laat zien dat de meeste Georgische leraren Engels, ondanks hun – waargenomen – positieve houding jegens en steun voor het gebruik van CLT, de meeste zaken die in de literatuur besproken zijn als verbonden met de uitvoering van CLT in een niet-Engelse context ook als problematisch zagen. Het is daarnaast interessant om erop te wijzen dat – in de interviews – de leraren terughoudender waren in het erkennen van uitdagingen die betrekking hadden op hun eigen rol in het onderwijs, en, in plaats daarvan, vooral problemen noemden die betrekking hadden op de leerlingen en op de leiding. Gevraagd naar een reactie op dezelfde uitdagingen in meer algemene zin, gaven leraren toe dat een deel van de problemen

veroorzaakt zou kunnen worden door het ontbreken van bepaalde vaardigheden bij henzelf. Aan de andere kant werd door hen een aantal zeer problematische aspecten van CLT, zoals het toetsen op de feitelijke communicatieve vaardigheid van de leerlingen, geëvalueerd als de minst problematische onderdelen van het studieproces. Dit kan opnieuw uitgelegd worden aan de hand van het feit dat de leraren totale vrijheid genieten om hun eigen toetsschema's en -methoden te gebruiken; ze worden in dat proces zelden gesuperviseerd of gevolgd door externe instanties. Met betrekking tot de effecten van bepaalde externe factoren werden er geen significante, brede verschillen gevonden tussen groepen leraren van verschillende soorten scholen in de mate waarin zij op de hoogte waren van het officiële beleidsdocument en of zij de aanbevelingen daarin opvolgden. Voor wat betreft het begrip van de theorie achter CLT bleek dat leraren van kleine, centraal gelegen scholen een significant beter inzicht in die theorie hadden dan leraren van andere soorten scholen. Hierbij is het interessant om op te merken dat, hoewel duidelijk was dat leraren van openbare scholen in Tbilisi gemiddeld over een langduriger ervaring in het taalonderwijs beschikken en veelal ouder zijn dan leraren van particuliere scholen, geen van deze factoren een positief effect bleek te hebben op de mate van hun bekendheid en meegaandheid met het huidige taalbeleid of op de mate van hun kennis/begrip van de theorie van CLT. Een hogere leeftijd en meer ervaring maakt niet dat leraren meer waardering hebben voor de communicatieve manier van onderwijs of minder beducht zijn voor de confrontatie met de aan CLT gelieerde problemen in de praktijk van het klaslokaal.

In Hoofdstuk 8 (Studie 2), Learners' Attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching, wordt duidelijk dat Georgische leerlingen over het algemeen laten zien dat zij de meeste principes en toepassingen van CLT accepteren. Desalniettemin waren er ook niet op CLT gestoelde leerervaringen die door leerlingen geprefereerd werden boven meer CLT-compatibele toepassingen. Een meerderheid van de leerlingen gaf bijvoorbeeld een voorkeur aan voor meer op precisie dan op welbespraaktheid georiënteerd onderwijs, en gaf meer prioriteit aan de voorbereiding op examens dan aan echte communicatie tijdens de lessen. Dit toont opnieuw aan hoe buitengewoon belangrijk het is om de voorgeschreven onderwijsmethode te laten aansluiten aan een toetssysteem: tenzij de toetsmethoden in Georgië beter georiënteerd worden op het meten van communicatieve vaardigheden, en zo lang zij hun vooral op de vorm gerichte, niet-communicatieve karakter behouden, zal het erg moeilijk zijn om te garanderen dat de onder-wijsmethodologie in het leerproces in Georgië van echt communicatieve aard is. In hun evaluatie van aan CLT gelieerde problemen classificeerden de leerlingen de toepassing van CLT in taalklassen in Tbilisi als matig uitdagend, waarbij zij van hun kant het grote aantal leerlingen per klas in de openbare scholen als voornaamste probleem aangaven. Ten aanzien van het effect van de factoren soort school en sekse op de houding van leerlingen

jegens CLT werd in de studie vastgesteld dat leerlingen van particuliere scholen over het algemeen significant meer waardering hebben voor CLT dan leerlingen van openbare scholen. Leerlingen van particuliere scholen zijn ook geneigd om significant minder problemen te zien bij de uitvoering van CLT dan hun tegenhangers van openbare scholen. Bovendien bestond het enige significante verschil met betrekking tot taalactiviteiten tussen de bij de studie betrokken vrouwelijke en mannelijke leerlingen uit een neiging van de meisjes om een grotere voorkeur te hebben voor CLT-achtige activiteiten dan de jongens.

In Hoofdstuk 9 (Studie 3), Lesson Observations, wordt verslag gedaan van de resultaten van de observatie van Engelse lessen in de praktijktaalklas, dat wil zeggen over de mate waarin de bijgewoonde lessen communicatief van aard waren. Uit de studie komt naar voren dat de praktijk van het taalonderwijs op scholen voor voortgezet onderwijs in Tbilisi een weinig communicatief karakter heeft. De uitvoering van CLT werd daarentegen als bovengemiddeld moeilijk bevonden, met een waarde gelegen tussen de uitkomsten die werden gerapporteerd door de leraren enerzijds en de leerlingen anderzijds. De observaties maakten ook duidelijk dat de taalleerlingen de groep met de minste problemen in het leerproces zijn. Er werden geen specifieke problemen waargenomen met betrekking tot hun deelname aan de lessen, noch bij het spreken in het Engels, noch bij hun reacties wanneer ze in het Engels werden toegesproken. Het grootste probleem van deze groep is de enorme spreiding van de mate waarin leerlingen de taal beheersen. De leraren werden geïdentificeerd als de grootste bron van uitdaging/problematiek in het leerproces; vooral hun gebrek aan beheersing van het Engels, onvoldoende bekendheid met en begrip van de principes van CLT, te geringe praktische vaardigheden in het taalonderwijs en de waargenomen invloed van de traditionele, op de vorm gerichte taalonderwijsmethoden, vielen op. De waardering van andere aan CLT gelieerde problemen, zoals het grote aantal leerlingen in een klas, , een gebrek aan leermiddelen en technische faciliteiten, een toetssysteem dat niet compatibel is met CLT, kwam – qua mate van ernst – uit op een niveau gelegen tussen dat wat vastgesteld werd voor leerling-gerelateerde problemen enerzijds en leraar-gerelateerde problemen anderzijds. Aangaande het effect van het 'soort school' en bepaalde eigenschappen van leraren op het communicatieve karakter van het taalonderwijs werd vastgesteld dat het taalonderwijs in particuliere scholen van significant meer communicatieve aard is dan dat in openbare scholen. Een ander significant verschil in de communicatieve aard van taalonderwijs dat werd opgemerkt, bestond tussen centraal gelegen particuliere scholen en particuliere scholen in de periferie van de stad; het taalonderwijs aan de eerstgenoemde scholen had significant sterkere communicatieve eigenschappen dan dat aan de laatstgenoemde scholen. Ten aanzien van de invloed van leeftijd werd duidelijk dat jongere leraren er meer toe neigden om meer communicatieve vormen van onderwijs toe te passen en minder problemen ondervonden in het onderwijs-

proces dan hun oudere collega's. Ook werd duidelijk dat leraren met minder onderwijservaring een meer communicatief type onderwijs gaven dan hun meer ervaren collega's. Dit betekent dat meer ervaring niet automatisch leidt tot een betere aanpassing m.b.t. pedagogische principes; Met andere woorden: het maakt het loslaten van sterk aangehangen – maar mogelijk onpraktische – pedagogische principes moeilijker. Bij onderzoek naar de discrepantie tussen de houding van de leraren ten opzichte van CLT en hun feitelijke manier van lesgeven werd een behoorlijk groot verschil gevonden bij leraren aan openbare scholen maar niet bij leraren aan particuliere scholen. Deze resultaten laten zien dat een sterke acceptatie van en goedkeuring aan een voorgestelde lesmethode niet per se een voldoende voorwaarde is voor een succesvolle toepassing ervan in het klaslokaal.

In Hoofdstuk 10 (Studie 4), Learners' Communicative Proficiency in English, het laatste empirische hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift, wordt verslag gedaan van het onderzoek naar de communicatieve vaardigheden van leerlingen aan scholen voor voortgezet onderwijs in Tbilisi. Uit de analyse van de resultaten van dit onderzoek bleek dat de algehele beheersing van het Engelse door 1e- en 2e-jaars leerlingen in Georgië ongeveer op het CERF niveau A1 tot A2 lag, d.w.z. één tot twee niveaus lager dan wat van overheidswege in Georgië is vastgelegd als het beoogde niveau van beheersing van vreemde talen in deze leeftijdsgroep. Verder onderzoek naar de wijze waarop bepaalde onafhankelijke factoren deze resultaten mogelijk hebben beïnvloed leverde significante variaties op. Voor wat betreft de factor schooltype werd vastgesteld dat de resultaten van particuliere scholen significant beter waren dan die van openbare scholen, analoog aan de bevindingen van Studie 3 (Hoofdstuk 9). De communicatieve vaardigheid van leerlingen aan particuliere scholen, en vooral aan centraal gelegen particuliere scholen, bleek significant beter te zijn dan die van leerlingen aan openbare scholen. Dit betekent dat de kwaliteit van het onderwijs dat gegeven wordt in verschillende typen scholen in Tbilisi, samen met andere factoren, een behoorlijke invloed zou kunnen hebben op het eindresultaat, de communicatieve vaardigheid van leerlingen in het Engels.

Als de analyses van de resultaten uit alle vier in dit proefschrift beschreven studies worden opgesomd, kan gesteld worden dat, hoewel de situatie met betrekking tot CLT op het theoretische vlak ongeveer dezelfde is op alle scholen (Hoofdstuk 7 en 8), er significante verschillen zijn tussen de onderzochte schooltypen met betrekking tot de praktische kant van de zaak, zowel in de praktijk van het taalonderwijs als in de feitelijke communicatieve vaardigheid van de leerlingen (Hoofdstuk 9 en 10). Zowel de praktijk van het communicatief taalonderwijs als de communicatieve vaardigheden van de leerlingen zijn het best in centraal gelegen particuliere scholen, gevolgd door de particuliere scholen in de periferie van de stad. Voor de twee soorten openbare scholen zijn deze variabelen (onderwijspraktijk en vaardigheid van leerlingen)

vrijwel identiek, waarbij de openbare scholen significant lagere resultaten scoren dan de twee soorten particuliere scholen.

Waargenomen werd dat ook ervaring met extracurriculair taalonderwijs een significant effect had. In deze studie werd vastgesteld dat taalonderwijs door een privéleraar niet aantoonbaar bijdraagt tot het verbeteren van de communicatieve vaardigheid in het Engels van leerlingen in Georgië, terwijl tevens bevestigd werd dat particuliere taalscholen en blootstelling aan gesproken Engels (als moedertaal) juist wel bevorderlijk waren voor de verwerving van betere communicatieve vaardigheden van de leerlingen. In Studie 4 kwam ook naar voren dat het vooral de leerlingen van particuliere scholen zijn die profiteren van díe soorten extracurriculair taalonderwijs waarvan is vastgesteld dat zij bijzonder efficiënt zijn voor het verbeteren van de communicatieve vaardigheden in het Engels. Deze bevinding kan, tot op zekere hoogte, gebruikt worden ter ondersteuning van het argument dat de sociale achtergrond van leerlingen in particuliere scholen het voor hen mogelijk maakt om taalonderwijs van een hogere kwaliteit en met een betere gerichtheid op communicatie te krijgen, zowel binnen de eigen school als daarbuiten. Het eindresultaat daarvan zou een communicatieve vaardigheid zijn die veel groter is dan die welke leerlingen op openbare scholen kunnen verwerven die deze kansen niet lijken te hebben.

In Hoofdstuk 11, Conclusions, wordt een overzicht gegeven van de bevindingen van de vier uitgevoerde studies, en worden, al concluderend, de voornaamste uitdagingen/problemen geïdentificeerd, en worden context-specifieke aanbevelingen gedaan omtrent welke maatregelen er in Georgië moeten worden genomen die ertoe kunnen bijdragen dat het huidige taalonderwijs een meer op communicatie gerichte bezigheid wordt. Daarnaast wordt in dit hoofdstuk aandacht besteed aan de beperkingen van het voor dit proefschrift uitgevoerde onderzoek en worden er suggesties gedaan voor toekomstig onderzoek. Bij wijze van algehele conclusie wordt gesteld dat, in lijn met de bevindingen van het huidige onderzoek, en ondanks de radicale hervormingen die er op het gebied van het taalonderwijs in Georgië zijn bewerkstelligd, er nog veel moet gebeuren om dat taalonderwijs om te vormen tot een meer praktische en op vaardigheden gerichte bezigheid. Gelukkig zijn er op dit punt in Georgië de belangrijkster voorwaarden hiertoe – een positieve basis, dynamiek en aanwijzingen-ten-goede – aanwezig. Dit betekent dat, zolang aan bepaalde criteria wordt voldaan en bepaalde uitdagingen effectief ter hand worden genomen, de CLT een zonnige toekomst heeft in Georgië.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Natalia Edisherashvili was born on 24 March 1980 in Tbilisi, Georgia. After graduating from high school in 1997, she entered Tbilisi State University, majoring in Western European Languages and Literature. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in English Language and Literature in 2001. Natalia studied in the United States as an exchange student at Alamance College, in North Carolina, and completed a one-year course in English Language and Literature in 1999.

From 2003–2005 Natalia studied for her Master's Degree in Philology at Tbilisi State University. She did her MA research at Washington University, St. Louis, and defended her thesis – *Myths and Symbols in the Works of Tennessee Williams* – in 2005. Natalia also undertook a series of local as well as international training courses in the field of foreign language teaching in the period of 2006–2009. She started her PhD research in 2010 at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, focusing on the English language teaching situation in Georgia.

Since 2000, Natalia has held teaching and management positions at various academic institutions. She started teaching English as a Foreign Language while still engaged in her BA studies at a private primary school in 2000, and in 2001 at International House Tbilisi. After completion of her MA, from 2005–2006, Natalia also worked at Tbilisi State University, giving a course to BA students in English Grammar. In 2006, after moving to Belgium, Natalia worked as a teacher of English at the Language Center of the Université Catholique de Louvain. Upon her return to Georgia in 2008, Natalia started working at the Caucasian Academic Center (CAC) as a teacher of English and a teacher trainer. Soon after she was promoted to the position of Academic Program Director of the same center. In 2009, in parallel with her position at CAC, Natalia started working as a Director of Studies at the language center of the British-Georgian Academy, where she worked before moving to the Netherlands, where her husband was posted as the Ambassador of Georgia. In 2010 Natalia founded a Georgian Weekend School in The Hague, where she works as its Academic Director and teaches courses in Georgian as a second language to Georgian children living in the Netherlands.